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ABSTRACT

Accurate information about lesbians has been difficult to obtain; much information that is available has been extrapolated from studies of homosexual men. A survey was conducted to reach the diverse cross-section of the lesbian population and to obtain accurate data with which to define the lesbian community. Questionnaires were distributed to lesbians in various locations, including feminist bookstores, religious meetings, lesbian bars, a Gay Community Services Center, and waiting rooms of homosexual therapists. The questionnaire was completed by 995 lesbians, most of whom were white. This report presents findings from the survey. It begins by noting that 8 years have passed since the distribution of the survey in 1980 and the publication of the report in 1988, and by putting the lesbian experience of 1980 into perspective with lesbian experiences in 1988. A profile of the "typical" responding lesbian is included. A section on research methods and procedures discusses the research design, the survey questionnaire, sampling techniques, and data management and analysis procedures. The section on survey findings provides a brief overview of results, followed by data in the areas of background and lifestyle, discrimination, stress and health, and the lesbian experience. A chapter on selected issues examines lesbian violence and fear of discrimination. The survey questionnaire and a topic and summary index are appended. (NB)

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A LESBIAN PROFILE

A Survey of 1000 Lesbians

conducted by

the Research Committee of
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WOMEN FOR UNDERSTANDING

edited by

Judith M. Saunders, R.N., D.N.Sc., F.A.A.N.
Judith D. Tupac, D.D.S.
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A Publication of

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Final editing of the source study is still in progress and some supporting material, such as tables, while referred to in the text, are not included herein. Questions regarding the findings that may arise from these omissions may be directed to:

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CONTENTS

PAGE		
vii	FOREWORD	
viii	ABOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WOMEN FOR UNDERSTANDING	
1	INTRODUCTION	
1		Why Conduct a Survey?
1		The 1977 Membership Survey
1		The 1980 Survey
2		Lesbians '88--Examining Today's Reality
5		A Profile [We Couldn't Resist]
7	RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES	
7		The Research Design
7		The Survey Questionnaire
8		Sampling
8		Data Management and Analysis Procedures
10	THE FINDINGS	
10		Overview
10		Background and Lifestyle
15		Discrimination
16		Stress and Health
20		The Lesbian Experience
23	SELECTED ISSUES	
23		Lesbian Violence
39		Fear of Discrimination
43	APPENDICES	
45		The Survey
61		The Topic & Summary Index

FOREWORD

In the fall of 1977, Southern California Women for The Whitman Radclyffe Foundation (SCW/WRF) distributed Personal Profile questionnaires to its membership--about 178 southern California lesbians, living principally, but not exclusively, in the Los Angeles area. When 49% responded, it was a clear indication that members were aware of the importance of collecting accurate demographic and descriptive information to correct myths and distortions about lesbians.

In 1980, after SCW/WRF had been reorganized as Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), a research committee was formed to begin an even more ambitious project--the development of a data-gathering tool for use with a substantial number of lesbians, sampled and analyzed in a manner that would lend validity to the findings. The committee was composed of SCWU volunteers, some of whom had both background and current vocation in academic research.

SCWU committed funds for the design and distribution of the questionnaire, the key entry of raw data and data analysis tables, and the write-up of the survey results. Lack of grant funding and the use of an essentially volunteer project management staff delayed the timely publication of results, although preliminary findings were reported by Judith Saunders at the first conference of the American Association of Anthropology in Sacramento, May 1983, and at the Seventh National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference in Washington, D.C., in March 1986. Findings were also reported in issues of the SCWU newsletter.

In the fall of 1987, renewed effort was made to report on the data in response to a general feeling that the survey results are still timely and may one day provide the "benchmark" for illuminating the ongoing saga of lesbians in America. We are particularly proud to have been among the very first studies developed by lesbians, distributed by lesbians, then analyzed and reported on by lesbians.

In the interest of reducing further delay, the decision was made to scale down the scope of the report. The data are rich, and the impact is both illuminating and disturbing. That we have the basis now for a definable lesbian identity cannot be argued; how much this identity may change over time as society evolves in its view of lesbians, may be the subject of future surveys.

--Judith M. Saunders, R.N., D.N.Sc., F.A.A.N.
Judy Tupac, D.D.S.
Bunny MacCulloch
October, 1988

A Word About the Other Women Who Contributed to this Effort

A project of this magnitude owes a debt of gratitude to many individuals for varying degrees of commitment. The amount of data gathered from the survey was truly monumental, and many women were instrumental in keeping the ball rolling during one phase or another. The editors wish to thank the dozens of women who participated in this project and hope to credit them by name in the final edition of this report.

ABOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WOMEN FOR UNDERSTANDING

Known as SCWU, Southern California Women for Understanding is the nation's largest non-profit educational membership organization for lesbians. Begun in 1976 as "Southern California Women for the Whitman Radclyffe Foundation," it functioned as a support group for a San Francisco-based (primarily gay male) organization. Later, a small group of Los Angeles members decided that the time had come for an organization by and for lesbians only.

Now in its thirteenth year, SCWU has more than 1200 members in six chapters serving Long Beach/Orange County, Los Angeles/San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Ventura/Santa Barbara, Riverside/San Bernardino, and San Diego.

Through SCWU, lesbians from all walks of life come together in safety and find a common denominator in educational functions. Membership is composed of women who value and contribute to their community. As an organization, our goal is to eradicate negative stereotypical images by example and through positive educational programs about our concerns, lifestyles and issues.

In addition to a wide range of activities for our members, SCWU is an active and visible member of the Southern California lesbian and gay communities, providing regular financial support to the local office of the ACLU, the International Lesbian and Gay Archives, and Connexxus (a Los Angeles-based social service organization for lesbians). We sponsor the Lesbian Alert Network--informing interested women of the need for emergency action with regard to pending political or social issues; and in 1987/88 we conducted a City of West Hollywood-funded Community Training Project to educate local social service agencies, city employees, and law enforcement personnel about gay and lesbian issues.

SCWU has been active in the fight against AIDS and AIDS discrimination through its efforts in opposing Propositions 64, 69, 96, and 102, and in educating the community and the public through forums, educational presentations and publications such as "Lesbians: Low Risk for AIDS, High Risk for Discrimination." Other community activities have included participation in the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987, the March for Women's Lives in 1986, and the National Lesbian Rights Conference in 1988.

SCWU has been effective in its commitment to make a difference for <u>all</u> lesbians by working positively and vigorously for social change. Not all of our members feel they can leave their closets to join us publicly--and we are <u>their</u> voices as well as the voices of the more out and outspoken. It is through the publication and distribution of reports like this that we can do our part to educate the total public: politicians, health professionals, clergy, law enforcement, service providers, teachers, white-, pink- and blue-collar workers, the media, and ourselves as well.

--The Board of Directors
Southern California Women for Understanding

<u>Los Angeles,</u>
<u>October, 1988</u>

INTRODUCTION

Why Conduct a Survey?

Accurate information about lesbians was difficult to obtain at the time this study was initiated; all too often information that was available had been extrapolated from studies of gay men. If indeed it was a lesbian study, then the lesbians in it tended to be all of a kind: all in psychiatric treatment, all in college, all in bars, or all in one organization.

When characteristics and behaviors are routinely attributed to persons belonging to a particular group--accurate or not--we say that a stereotype has emerged. Therefore, one motivation for looking at actual group characteristics can be to identify some level of reality about that group, rather than continuing to accept unchallenged stereotypes about it.

From the start, Southern California Women for Understanding was bombarded with questions from politicians, researchers, the media, and yes, its own members--questions for which it had too few answers. The need for a new kind of information was clear--data-based information that was drawn from the background and experiences of a representative cross-section of the lesbian population.

A recurrent dream of lesbians--collectively and individually--has been to have our own data so that we can at last define ourselves. Decades of having male authorities draw inferences about us from male-based information were followed by years of female authorities drawing inferences from the same male-based resources--simply because lesbian data was unavailable.

When SCWU distributed the 1977 survey, it came a step closer to fulfilling that dream for all lesbians.

The 1977 Membership Survey

Existing information about lesbians in the late seventies was scanty at best. Those who attempted to study lesbians directly faced the problem of trying to identify and make contact with a very elusive population. Funds were generally in short supply for studies of this type, with the result being that only small numbers of lesbians could be reached through any one study. These real and methodological problems reduced the ability of researchers to generalize their findings to the whole population, although many researchers acted as though that constraint did not exist.

The 49% response rate to the 1977 membership survey far exceeded expectations. These lesbians truly were hungry for data about themselves as a population and were not afraid to respond to requests to complete questionnaires.

The respondents, all SCWU members drawn largely from the professional and business community, were well-educated but underpaid considering their education levels. They were unusually active in political and citizenship spheres. One respondent wrote poignantly of her inability to obtain health care solely on the basis of her lesbianism. Those lesbians who were mothers had a significantly higher proportion of male children than would be expected. These results and others stimulated SCWU, in 1980, to proceed with an even more ambitious project.

The 1980 Survey

With the 1980 survey, SCWU was determined to reach the diverse cross-section of the

lesbian community that had eluded researchers in the past. Only recently had women joined gay organizations in any number, and those who joined co-sexual organizations were usually overshadowed in number by the gay males attending.

Not knowing how many lesbians could be reached, the committee printed 5000 questionnaires. Much thought and effort were expended in determining the best way to connect with "hard-to-get" lesbians. Resource lists were compiled and exchanged, and distribution began by using networking as the sampling strategy. Women at every social and educational gathering sponsored by SCWU were asked to take the survey to friends, relatives, acquaintances, and to meetings of other organizations. In Los Angeles, gay and lesbian groups for blacks, Hispanics and Asian/Pacific people were contacted.

The questionnaire was also distributed in feminist bookstores, at meetings of religious groups, in lesbian bars, at the Gay Community Services Center, and in the waiting rooms of gay therapists. Several hundred lesbians attending the Gay Expo in Los Angeles were reached. Lesbian support groups such as those connected with A.C.W. [the Alcoholism Center for Women] and A.A. called for copies to distribute.

The response was overwhelming--almost 1000 questionnaires were returned--fully 20% of the nearly 5000 distributed. The 92 multi-part questions yielded over 400 data entries per respondent, providing us with over 400,000 bits of information to digest. For an all-volunteer committee, this was success of nightmare proportions!

Sadly, lesbians of color did not respond in any great number to the survey; what follows the methodology section therefore is a profile of the backgrounds and lifestyle of 995 mostly white lesbians, with an illuminating look at the issues of stress and health, discrimination and the fear of it, and a section that specifically highlights the "lesbian experience."

But first, given the eight years between the distribution of the survey and the publication of this report, we want to put the lesbian experience of 1980 into perspective with our experiences in 1988.

Lesbians '88--Examining Today's Reality

by Bunny MacCulloch

"Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose"
[the more this changes, the more it's the same thing.]

Although there have indeed been significant changes in lesbian lives and lifestyles between 1980 (when the SCWU questionnaire was developed and distributed) and 1988, (when the report on that study was published), some of the things that affect us most as individuals remain the same.

We are still feared; we are still hated. We still grow up isolated from one another. There is very little gay folklore to guide us, no gay old wives tales. Alone among oppressed peoples, we are effectively orphaned by having to "come out" to our parents, and by not knowing until relatively late in adolescence what it is even that we must tell them.

On the other hand, we are open and public as never before in history. We have thriving colonies in every major city (greater Los Angeles has Silverlake, Mount Washington and West Hollywood.) We have our own synagogues and churches, our own libraries and historical societies, our own bars and restaurants, our own customs and mores.

We are, in fact, a community. It is so extensive and diverse that it includes many subcultures--from "dykes on bikes" to "lesbians in limos," and from elite professionals to migrant

farm workers. We have good channels of communication: a viable and sometimes vibrant lesbian/gay press; radio, TV, movies, theater; books and magazines. This means we can, at least as a people, stop being invisible. Our youth can have role models. We can nourish our beginning sense of heritage. We can get our past back.

We are, effectively, no longer a subculture--we are a competing, emerging satellite culture, akin to those of ethnic or "minority" groups. We have moved in stages from furtive, isolated individual behavior to nationwide celebrations of lesbian and gay pride each June. Millions of us march or watch, giving each other the love we have always deserved, but have found so difficult to obtain or to give ourselves. This is indeed change--ongoing positive change, for the most part.

Nevertheless, there is a constant pressure from the dominant culture to keep the emerging ones down. Difference is threatening; difference challenges basic assumptions. Any differences between women and men, between black and white, Jew and Christian, gay and straight--are deficiencies in the "inferiorized" group. We are not just like everyone else. We are kept marginal, less-than, and therefore self-hating. We have to evolve into our wholeness, our self-acceptance.

Our personal histories "recapitulate the phylogeny of gay culture." We move through stages individually, just as our culture has moved, and is moving, on a sort of moral continuum. Sociologist Laud Humphries lists the "stations of the cross" so to speak: covert behavior; marginal involvement; transformed participation; open endorsement; and final arrival at a congruent and satisfactory personal adjustment.

Participation in one's own satellite culture--generally through involvement with organizations--speeds and enables this process because an organization generally is somewhat farther along on the continuum than the individual is. If one can visualize the myriad lesbian/gay organizations as rivers, with people moving along them at individual paces, one can see that in any given year the travellers are basically the same, or at least there are other, new travellers in the same places. Although the individuals change greatly and move on, the population on the river is ever replenished and the travellers change very little as a group over time.

In fact, it is just this that the SCWU survey shows: the data are amazingly consistent with findings from earlier surveys, including "pre-liberation" reports from the early 1960s forward. Although as a community we have seen great changes--some positive, some negative--the individuals who make up that community are very much more the same than different, and this is true not only over time, but over distance as well. Research Committee members are pleased about this confluence of findings, because it lends credibility to our study and gives us confidence that our findings are valid. Thus we can be comfortable when we report here on previously unknown material. We can suppose that it, too, is valid.

Several of these early studies overcame the difficulties of gaining access to an invisible population by getting questionnaires distributed through Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), the nation's first lesbian organization. In our survey we made a particular effort to query women who did not belong to any lesbian or gay organizations, and we were successful in doing so: 26% of our respondents were these non-participants. The SCWU survey is the first to examine the lifestyles of these women.

It was also first in sheer numbers: nearly 1000 lesbians participated--a startling number when compared to other studies, some of which had funding for up to thirty staff! We list here for comparison some of the well-known reports:

Daughters of Bilitis' descriptive study mailed out in June of 1958 netted, over a year's time, 157 usable replies. Results printed in The Ladder, September 1959;

Gundlach-Reiss study launched in the September 1963 issue of The Ladder reported on 226 lesbians and 233 non-lesbians in July, 1967;

F.E. Kenyon's series called "Studies in Female Homosexuality," (Brit. J. Psych. 1968) used 123 lesbians and 123 heterosexual women;

Shere Hite, in the 1976 Hite Report, reported on 3019 women, of whom 144 said they preferred sex with women, and about as many said they were bisexual;

Masters and Johnson used 94 men and 82 women for their 1979 Homosexuality in Perspective;

Bell and Weinberg used 686 male and 293 female homosexuals studied in 1970 for the landmark book Sexual Preference, published eleven years later in 1981;

Karla Jay and Allen Young's The Gay Report (1979) gathered a national sample of 962 lesbians and 4329 gay men, but reported only on a sub-sample of 250 lesbians and 419 gay males;

The Mendola Report, a 1980 book based on a nationwide study of gay and lesbian couples, reported on 226 lesbians and 178 gays;

Virginia Brooks' Minority Stress and Lesbian Women (1981) used 675 lesbian respondents, all or mostly from California;

The blockbuster **American Couples** (1983). Blumstein and Schwartz began work in 1975 and got back 12,000 usable questionnaires; for the interviews and follow-ups, however, they chose only 120 heterosexual couples, 90 lesbian couples and 90 gay male couples.

Clearly, we were--and are--breaking ground.

If Los Angeles county were a state, it would be the eighth largest in the nation. Our data from this large metropolitan area (Los Angeles and environs) may be typical of other large urban areas, but since we did not have a truly random sample, we cannot go ahead and make certain assumptions on the basis of either our raw data or our cross tabulated tables.

Of course we did make assumptions, and will continue to do so; but one doesn't know, looking excitedly at some of the more interesting relationships among the data, exactly what these mean. We were hunting, looking for information about ourselves. We had no (or tried to have no) preconceived ideas or hypotheses about what we would find.

We can and do take pride in our burgeoning culture, our beginnings of power, our abilities to care for "our own"--and hope that each individual's progress will move forward that much faster because of it.

When we were in the final weeks of putting this study report together, the national Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation published its final report, The National Lesbian Health Care Survey. Judith Bradford and Caitlin Ryan tell the "stories and experience of almost 2,000 Lesbians from all 50 states, their strength and suffering, their struggles, their diversity, their ability to survive in a hostile environment--reflected in the tables and charts and collective data. . ." which focus on the health and health care needs of Lesbians throughout the United States.

As lesbians, as researchers, we welcome this truly competent and well-written survey report. We are particularly pleased to find that many areas of the surveys overlap with our own. (principally health care and discrimination issues, as well as certain demographic parameters). This is important to us, because we are now beginning to be able to get comparative data about lesbians: who we are, how we live, what's important to us, how we cope.

Logistically, the National Lesbian Health Care Survey came out when we were too far out in our report to compare the two in any depth; but we will try to identify for our readers some of the major areas where findings from the two surveys are congruent. Although our comparisons will admittedly be fairly sketchy, we can say from our own reading that there are virtually no major differences to reconcile between the two when they address the same topics. There are times, however, when they address different areas or approach areas from different perspectives.

A careful comparison does need to be made of these (and other) studies, but that is beyond our scope at this time. If our energies hold out, we hope to write a second report of our own survey which will deal with in-depth explorations of specific issues. Where appropriate, that report will include a closer examination of the comparable areas among our SCWU-sponsored survey and selected others.

A Profile [We Couldn't Resist]

It's hard to be completely scientific when there's a pattern emerging and it's one that's both surprising on the one hand, and full of I-told-you-so's on the other. Nevertheless, there is both value and fascination in knowing something about the "typical" responding lesbian. By selecting some of the most frequent [modal] responses from the questionnaire, we have compiled a working portrait.

In 1980:

--She called herself "lesbian,"--not gay or homosexual--throughout
--She was in a relationship at the time of the survey, had experienced few sexual problems, and almost always had orgasms when making love with a woman
--She had never been involved in role playing, and was probably never in the military
--Her ideal relationship was long-term, with a close commitment, and her history showed such relationships
--She wasn't sure what "made her" a lesbian, but felt it definitely wasn't environmental; she reported being a tomboy as a child
--She was a white, college educated professional with a Protestant background that didn't continue into adulthood, and though her income exceeded that of women in general, she was still paid less than her education suggests
--In her mid-thirties, she aligned herself with liberal causes, called herself a democrat, and was very likely to vote pro-choice, pro-ERA, pro-national health insurance, and against nuclear energy
--She was surprisingly "out" [for 1980] to some family members, non-gay friends and co-workers, but probably not to her neighbors; she was unlikely to have experienced overt discrimination
--Although she considered herself healthy, she very likely had sought help from a therapist or counselor when in crisis.

There is danger in trying to profile a group as diverse and complex as Los Angeles lesbians. The generalities, by definition, ignore the many differences within the group. Additionally, in spite of efforts to distribute the survey tool to women of differing backgrounds and lifestyles, it is clear by the responses that all groups were not well-represented.

That we as women have much in common with non-lesbians is not a surprise; that we lesbians have so many special things in common with each other is a delight. These commonalities have further support in the findings of other studies, findings that seem constant from study to study. Before looking at the findings that give substance to these commonalities, we will describe the methods used to obtain these results.

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Judith M. Saunders

The Research Design

This study was both exploratory and descriptive. Limited time and resources were pivotal factors in our choosing to use survey methods, rather than qualitative approaches, to examine issues about lesbians and lesbian lifestyles. The overall question that guided the development of the questionnaire and the choice of sampling strategies was, "What characteristics best describe Los Angeles lesbians: who are we; how do we spend our time; what distresses us; how do we manage our lives and problems?"

When we began this study, data based information about lesbians was limited--even basic demographic information was not available. We considered many aspects of lesbian lifestyles in order to select those issues that were central for our study. Clearly we needed basic information that described the sample, and labelled this simply "Background Information."

In our literature review, many of the existing studies had explored aspects of health problems that lesbians encountered. We expanded this focus so that we could explore the stresses that lesbians face, and learn how the group responded to its health problems. This inquiry was developed under the broad heading of "Stress and Health."

While it is self-evident that social stigma accompanies being gay or lesbian, little was known about how this stigma was translated into discriminatory actions that lesbians faced. We agreed that "Discrimination" was a critical variable to include in this study. Finally, we wanted information about how lesbians lead their lives. Like other people, lesbians direct their time and resources toward relationships, community service, pleasure activities, etc. Almost no information was available on "lesbians as humans." We struggled for an appropriate label for this study focus, and finally called it "The Lesbian Experience."

These four areas provided the organization scheme for the development of the questionnaire.

The Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed from the Research Committee members' knowledge of the literature and from knowledge gained through our professional and personal experiences. Committee members worked to develop questions for one of the areas, then brought their sample questions to the total committee where they were reviewed and refined.

Development of the questionnaire extended over several months before a tool emerged for pilot testing. We used the pilot testing to determine if the following criteria were met:

1. Can this questionnaire be completed in a half hour?
2. Do the questions make sense to women regardless of their level of education?
3. Does the questionnaire include issues that are relevant to lesbian lifestyles in the four areas being surveyed, and are there any areas that we have failed to address?

Pilot testing the questionnaire allowed us to find confusing questions and determine which questions to omit or reorganize so that we had a tool that met our criteria. The final step before printing the questionnaire was to format it so that the responses could be entered into the computer from the questionnaire directly.

The final questionnaire (See Appendix) contained 92 items that included both closed-

choice questions and some open-ended questions. Some items had multiple components, so the 92 items actually resulted in 400 individual responses to be entered into the computer for statistical analysis. These responses did not include the qualitative responses to the open-ended questions.

Sampling

By the time the questionnaire was ready for distribution in late 1980, SCWU had grown to approximately 500 members. While we agreed to distribute it to all SCWU members, we were concerned that this membership reflected predominantly white, closeted, professional women. The commitment to reach beyond SCWU organizational boundaries was perceived to be a key point in the credibility of the findings. We needed sampling strategies that would reach lesbians who represented many lifestyle patterns, not just those who were active in formal organizations, or those who visited bars, or those who were closeted, or those who were white, closeted, professional women.

As we considered various sampling strategies, we discovered the challenge of sampling a population that is largely invisible. Random sampling was not a viable choice because we had no defined population to sample. We also thought that lesbians do not cluster in specific locales, so we could not identify neighborhoods where specialized sampling techniques might gain access to lesbians. Sampling method is critical to survey research, and sampling is usually the major constraint in the extent that findings can be generalized from the sample studied to the population of interest. We needed to find a sampling method that reached lesbians who reflected a diversity of lifestyles, even if we could not ascertain that the pattern of diversity we sampled actually reflected the diversity that existed in the Los Angeles lesbian community. There simply was no way that we could confirm that sample and population matched among Los Angeles lesbians.

We ultimately decided to use a form of network sampling that expanded the boundaries of the network beyond our own personal acquaintances--people who might resemble too closely SCWU's members in values and demographics. To find a diverse sample of lesbians, the Research Committee compiled a list of resources in Los Angeles that could be used to reach "hard to find" lesbians. We also took the questionnaires to every SCWU social and educational gathering, and asked those attending to complete questionnaires themselves and to take questionnaires to friends, relatives, acquaintances, and to other organizations that had lesbians among their members. We contacted lesbian ethnic organizations, such as the Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Gays. We distributed the questionnaire to gay religious groups, feminist bookstores, lesbian bars, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, and to the waiting rooms of lesbian therapists. A gay "expo" was held in Los Angeles, and we distributed several hundred questionnaires to lesbians who attended. As word spread about the research project, groups called to request copies for their members.

Using these methods of distribution meant that our return rate would be low, since we often left questionnaires in places where they might not even be picked up by lesbians, or they might pick up a copy of the questionnaire, but not return it. We distributed nearly five thousand questionnaires and had about one thousand returned (996 that could be used for data analysis).

Data Management and Analysis Procedures

SCWU hired a data entry service to facilitate accurate and efficient handling of the information from the study. To accomplish accuracy with such a large data set, we arranged for

data-entry with 100% verification. This uses the procedure of entering all the data twice, then checking the two data entry runs for discrepancies, and correcting any errors found. After data entry was completed, one of the research committee members began programming for the statistical analyses. We used a general computer statistical analysis program (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences, commonly referred to as SPSS) for obtaining initial frequencies and percentages for all items (excluding open-ended questions) on the questionnaire. These early results were used to check for keypunch and coding errors that might skew the results. We also examined these initial runs to determine the effectiveness of our network sampling strategy. (See Findings for a more complete discussion).

During the several months required for data entry and computer error corrections, the Research Committee members were deciding how to organize the variables for comparison by statistical testing. We had not formulated hypotheses or formal objectives that could guide this portion of data analysis. Our discussions eventually resulted in a tentative list of variables for cross-tabulation with each other. For example, we easily agreed that we wanted an overview of findings for "SCWU members versus nonmembers," so that we could see how these two groups differed from each other. At first, we identified those variables that would be cross-tabulated in a "2 by 2" design, also referred to as a row by column table. In a row by column table, two sets of variables are examined in relation to each other. For example in looking at membership versus work status, the 2 by 2 table would be arranged as follows:

	WORK	
	Yes	No
SCWU	x	x
NON-SCWU	x	x

Cross-tabulations such as these were obtained for most items in the questionnaire. The Topic & Summary Index (see Appendix) contains a list of all the study variables as they related to specific topics. Individual cross-tabulations were obtained for many of the variables, such as education, religion, handedness, anger, battering, label of self, SCWU membership, etc. Each of these variables provided the basis for a separate analysis and computer-run. The same procedure was followed for each variable: we used the SPSS Chi-square program to determine significant relationships among the variables, at the alpha level of 0.05.

From committee discussions of the findings, we also established work groups to design specific data analysis plans to examine selected topics in greater depth. For example, we needed data-based operational definitions of high or low discrimination in order to examine the effects of discrimination on lesbians. One work-group developed the operational definition of discrimination along with the particular items that were relevant to use in the statistical analysis of discrimination levels. Another work-group developed the operational definition of degree of stress to use in further analysis of the role of stress among lesbians. Some of these specific data-analysis plans provided the framework for the findings that are included in following sections.

FINDINGS

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Overview

While the questionnaire collected data in four major categories, the introduction to the questionnaire asked respondents to address two issues before proceeding. First, we asked respondents to indicate their preference of terms to describe their own sexual or "affectional" orientation. Words used to label a group can reflect the image that society holds of the group, as well as help to shape the group's self image. Proclaiming "black is beautiful" taught us how semantics could serve political action for groups who want to break out of the role of victim in society. "Homosexual" has been the traditional scientific label to identify men who love men and women who love women. For many, "homosexual" has been a clinical term which could never be spoken with pride. "Gay" was a term originally chosen to indicate a duality of an affectional preference and a political awareness, but became a term closely aligned with men. We wanted to discover what label our respondents preferred.

Of the 960 people who responded to this item, 50% identified themselves as lesbian, with another 36% selecting gay as the preferred term. Other choices were bisexual (7%), and other (4%). Examples of other responses that women wrote in were dyke and woman-loving-woman.

Women identified themselves as members of SCWU (37%) or as nonmembers (64%). This response gave us an initial indication that sampling efforts to reach lesbians outside SCWU had been successful. We wanted to ensure that this report was more than a membership survey.

The remainder of this overview of the findings is organized in the order of the major divisions of the questionnaire: Background and Lifestyle; Discrimination; Stress and Health; and The Lesbian Experience. When possible, findings are organized to include information about the number of the sample who responded to that question (n=XXX), followed by percentages of responses in each category.

Background and Lifestyle

Items that collected basic demographic data were supplemented by items that provided information about use of leisure time, investments and resources, political activity and some childhood experiences. The mean age of respondents was 36 years, with a range of 18 to 70 and a standard deviation of 9.4 years.

Although we attempted to distribute the questionnaire to groups and places that would reach lesbians of color, only 3% each of black and latin/hispanic women responded. Ninety-one percent of the respondents were white, and 3% of the responses were distributed among Asian American, American Indian and Other.

The National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation's 1988 Lesbian Health Care Survey had a similar difficulty in getting non-white lesbians to respond to their questionnaire. About 88% of their sample was white; 4% were latina; nearly 6% were black, and a very small number (2%) were either Native American or Asian.

Religious affiliation was identified by respondents in terms of their background religion (n=976) and their current practice with religion (n=878). Religious background was distributed as follows: Catholic, 30%; Protestant, 46%; Jewish, 11%; Feminist Religion/WICCA, 0.3%; Other, 7%; and No religion, 6%. Respondents reported major shifts from their background religious

practices to what they practiced currently: Catholic, 6%; Protestant, 14%; Jewish, 7%; Feminist Religion/WICCA, 4%; Other, 21%; and No religion, 49%. Clearly, women did not continue to automatically practice their childhood religions as they reached adulthood. The most stable religious affiliation from background to adulthood was Jewish. The largest shift "away from" a religious affiliation was from the Protestant religion, and the largest gain in current practice was "No religion." In a sense these figures are not surprising, as many religions have taken strong moral stands against homosexuality and the practice of homosexual acts. It would seem that one effect of these negative stands has been to drive women away from active religious practice in their current lives.

While paralleling our figures almost exactly when describing background religious practice, the NLGHF Lesbian Health Care Survey does differ from the SCWU Survey in describing current practice. "No religion" was chosen by 66% of their sample, and 49% of ours as the term best describing current religious practice. Continued awareness among lesbians of mainstream religion's lack of support for lesbian relationships (and indeed, women's issues generally) seems to contribute to what may be long-term erosion of religious affiliations.

The respondents were well educated (n=980). Twenty-nine percent held graduate degrees, while another 30% had graduated from college with a bachelors degree. Another 18% had completed an AA degree. Twenty-two percent were high school graduates. Only 1% of those sampled reported having less than a high school education. Meaningful education occurs in many settings, not just through high school or institutions of higher learning. Only 19% of the sample reported having none of these other educational experiences. Fifty-two percent indicated they had on-the-job training leading to special qualifications; 37% reported specialized training that led to a certificate or diploma; and 12% reported some other supplemental education.

Respondents checked all the employment status categories that applied to them (for example, a respondent might check that she was retired and she worked part time), so the figures reported here will add up to more than 100%. Only 6% reported they were retired or unemployed. Seventy-five percent worked full time; 23% worked part time. Nine percent of the respondents worked more than one job.

The women represented a diverse selection of occupational groups: 42% professional; 13% managerial; 12% educational; 8% clerical; 7% other; 6% student; 7% laborer; 4% creative; and 4% governmental. Women were asked to report all sources of income that applied to them, so again the responses will total above 100%. Most women cited income sources from salary (92%) and investments (27%). Other responses included other (9%), family (6%), independent wealth (5%), child support (5%), disability (3%), unemployment compensation (2%), welfare (1%), and alimony (1%).

Despite the high levels of education, the diverse occupational groups that were skewed toward professional and management, and the high level of employment, the women in this sample (n=984) reported relatively low levels of annual income from all their sources: 6% over $40,000; 8% $30,000-$40,000; 12% $25,000-$30,000; 38% $15,000-$25,000; 32% $5,000-$15,000; and 5% less than $5,000.

This constellation of findings about educational level (high), occupational level (professional, managerial) and income level (lower than education-occupation would lead one to expect) has been found in virtually every study of lesbians from the 1960s forward, including the 1988 NLGHF Lesbian Health Care Survey.

Several items in the questionnaire addressed current and former attachment status. The first question addressed whether or not the woman had ever lived with or married a man. Since respondents were asked to check all that apply, answers will total more than 100%. Fifty-one percent of the women had never lived with or married a man. Forty-one percent responded that

they had lived with or married a straight man; 17% had lived with or married a gay man. Those who had lived with or married a man provided the following reasons: Because I loved him (22%); Because it was expected (17%); For convenience (9%); To hide my gayness from myself (6%); and To hide my gayness from others (4%).

Current attachment status revealed that most women respondents were in a relationship: 61% said they were in a relationship they defined as a lesbian marriage or a couple relationship. In the NLGHF survey also, 60% of the women were in primary lesbian relationships; this is about the same number of general population women who are legally married. Thirty-seven percent defined themselves as single. Other attachment statuses included divorced (12%); separated (3%); widowed and heterosexual marriage (1% each).

The women did not divide themselves evenly when asked about their backgrounds as tomboys (64%), average (31%) or very feminine (5%). The Los Angeles Times (Demise of the Tomboy, March 22, 1988) reported findings from a 1977 study by Janet Hyde where 78% of undergraduate college women identified themselves as tomboys when they were girls. Eighty-nine percent of the women were righthanded; 9% were lefthanded and 2% were ambidextrous.

Where to spend holidays becomes a dilemma for many lesbian couples, as they are torn between staying with each other, visiting families apart, or choosing one family to visit. While heterosexual couples face the same choices, they do so with their couple status fully acknowledged, unlike many lesbian couples. Women shared with us information about where they usually spent Thanksgiving. All the following categories were cited by about 20% of the women: Family; It varies from year to year; With my lover; and Both friends and family. Other choices included Friends (16%) and Alone (1%).

Respondents were asked to indicate under "type of housing" whether they rented or owned their residences. The responses were fairly evenly divided between rent and own: rent 56%; own 44%. Most people who rented lived in apartments (53%), or houses (38%). Other rentals included: other (5%); condominiums, co-ops or townhouses (4%); and mobile homes (1%). Women who owned their residences were almost exclusively living in houses (78%), with a sharp decline in other housing types owned: condominium, co-op or townhouse (11%), mobile home (5%), and apartments and other 3% each.

All but 13% of the women reported that they currently lived in various sections of metropolitan Los Angeles. The sections were delineated the same as those used in the telephone directory (see page 3 of the original questionnaire reproduced in the Appendix).

Nine hundred and seventy-eight women responded to the question that asked who had raised them. Most women reported that they were raised by their mother and father (63%), although 27% reported they were raised by their mother only. Some women reported they were raised by other family member[s] (7%), father only (2%); and other non-family (2%).

Lesbians generally reported satisfaction with their work. Sixty-seven percent of the 977 women who responded said they were satisfied with both their work and where they worked, and another 19% indicated they were moderately satisfied. Only 9% were not satisfied, with another 6% reporting that they did not work.

One hundred and ninety-six women reported having at least one child. Another hundred and twenty-three reported having two children, with fifty-three women reporting having three children. Women reported on these children individually and included information about the sex of the child, age, whether the child lived with the mother or the father, knew of the mother's lesbianism, and whether the mother believed the child was gay. Reported findings will be limited to the information about three children. The mean scores for the three children will be reported first, followed by mean scores for child one, child two and child three. Forty-five percent of the children were male, 55% female. Forty-seven percent of the children lived with their mothers,

while 53% of the children did not live with mother. Twenty-two percent of the children lived with their fathers, but data were not gathered on the 31% who neither lived with mother nor father. Seventy-eight percent of the children knew the mother was a lesbian. Twenty percent of mothers reported believing that some of their children were gay.

Child one was more likely to be male (53%) than was either child two (46%) or child three (36%). Child one and three were most likely to live with mother (46% and 58% respectively), as compared with child two (37%). Living with father remained fairly constant for all three children, regardless of variation in reported "living with mother" figures: child one, 20%; child two, 24%; and child three, 23%. All three children knew their mother was a lesbian: child one and two 77% each, with child three 79%. Only a little less constant was the belief that the child was gay: child one, 23%; child two, 20% and child three, 17%.

Each respondent indicated separately the number of older sisters and brothers and younger sisters and brothers she had. The mean score of those who reported no brothers or sisters was 63%. Twenty-five percent reported having one brother or sister who was either younger or older than she, while another 8% reported having one sister or brother who was either younger or older. Few women reported having three or more older or younger sisters or brothers. While a mean of 63% reported having no older sisters or brothers, this cannot be translated to those women being an only child. A woman could have answered none for three of the four categories, and still reported, for example, three younger brothers. She would still be contributing to the high mean score in the three "none" categories.

Nine hundred and seventy-five women categorized themselves according to their political orientation from among specified categories. The separate categories of Democrat and Liberal each received 28% of the responses, while Independent received 13%. The remaining responses were fairly evenly divided among the other four categories: Other (9%); Republican (8%); Conservative (7%); and Far Left (7%).

In another attempt to interpret how women responded to social and political issues, women were asked if they were for or against specific issues. Findings are presented by the number of women responding to each issue, followed by the percentage For that issue. The Against score can be obtained by subtracting the For score from one hundred.

	n	For
Capital punishment	949	50%
Abortion	965	92%
Equal Rights Amendment	983	99%
National Health Insurance	929	79%
Gay Rights	985	100%
Nuclear Energy	926	26%

Believing in a cause, such as the Equal Rights Amendment, may not always be accompanied by activities that support that cause. In an attempt to discover women's degree of political and social activism, respondents were asked to indicate how often they engaged in activities, such as voting, giving money, volunteering time, and writing letters. These activities are reported by the number of women who responded to each category, followed by the percentage of women who responded that their activity level was never, low, or high.

Activity	Number	[Reported in percentages] Never	Low	High
Vote in elections	987	5	12	84
Money to causes	971	10	60	31
Money to candidates	972	54	39	7
Money to political parties	961	65	31	5
Time to causes	965	18	56	26
Time to candidates	958	55	42	3
Time to political parties	961	68	29	3
Write to politicians	968	37	60	8
Write to newspaper	966	54	42	4

Women seem to back up their beliefs more often by voting than by any other activity. Causes were the most successful activity for capturing women's time, energy and money more consistently than any other category of political or social action.

Important to the lifestyle of a group is how group members disburse their money. In political activism, women gave money to causes far more often than they gave to people (candidates) or to political parties. Another dimension of money disbursements is how women choose their business investments. Respondents were asked to identify their ownership pattern in a variety of investments. They responded to the preset categories of Do not own, Own individually or Own in partnership. Types of investments that respondents rated included a variety of savings accounts, income property, stocks, gold or silver, insurance and raw land. (The "other" category is not included in this report of findings). The least popular investments were Office/commercial income property (Do not own 96%); second trust deeds (86%) and raw land (84%). More women owned savings accounts individually (75%) than insurance (61%). When both types of ownership were merged, the five most frequently cited investments were regular savings accounts (89%), insurance (67%), stocks, etc (40%), income property of houses and apartments (33%), and gold or silver (33%). The two types of investment that were most likely to be shared were house/apartment income property (18%) and regular savings accounts (14%). Women were represented among all types of investment categories and reflect a diversity of involvement. The number of women who answered each category of investment varied from other (n=309) to savings account, regular (n=937).

When asked about the degree of indebtedness, only 4% of the 942 respondents reported they were beginning to have difficulty or were considering filing for bankruptcy. While women may not earn high sums of money, they seem to manage well on the amounts of money available to them.

Women travel primarily for pleasure, with moderate numbers of women reporting that they travel for business. Nineteen percent of the women travel for business a great deal or moderately. Fifty percent report no business travel and another 31% reported business travel of only a small amount. Women travel for pleasure in much greater numbers than they reported travelling for business: Great deal 12%; Moderate amount 43%; Small amount 2%; and None 3%. The mean number of pleasure trips reported each year per woman was 3.5.

Completing the information gathered about lifestyles of lesbians in this survey was a list of eighteen activities, excluding the category of "other," that respondents indicated they liked a lot, some or not at all. Two activities stand out as singularly unpopular: Nongay bars/clubs (67% don't like) and Craftwork/needlework (49% don't like). Among activities rated "like a lot," the four most frequently cited were Visit with Friends (74%), Live Concerts/Plays (69%), Read (67%), and Go to Restaurants for Dinner (67%). When "like a lot" and "like some" were

combined, the following ranking was obtained for how women in this survey preferred using their leisure time:

1. Visit with friends
2. Go to restaurants for dinner
3. Live concerts/plays
4. Stay at home
5. Read
6. Movies
7. Club activities/discussions
8. Work around house
9. Watch television
10. Camp
11. Participate in individual sports
12. Work around yard
13. Gay bars
14. Volunteer activity for organizations
15. Spectator sports
16. Participate in team sports
17. Craftwork/needlework
18. Other bars/clubs

Discrimination

Lesbians have been able to remain "invisible" in society when they chose to, and this lack of visibility has contributed to the general lack of concern that society has directed toward us. Only rarely has one read about a police raid upon a women's bar, yet raids on men's bars have been a frequent source of harassment, and provided tangible evidence of discrimination toward gay men. Conditions that allow lesbians to "pass as heterosexual women" do not provide total protection from discrimination. Fear of discrimination may exist regardless of any actual experiences of discrimination, and the fear itself can shape how lesbians live, how they choose friends and how they interact with society. We asked about discrimination directly, as well as fear of discrimination, in many dimensions of everyday life of lesbians.

When asked if anyone knew of the woman's gayness where she is now living, 30% of the respondents (n=982) did not know. Fifty-two percent said their gayness was known, but it was okay, while another 2% said it was known, but they were having trouble because of that. Another 2% reported being afraid someone will find out. Fourteen percent reported that their gayness was not known were they now lived.

Nine hundred and eighty-six women answered the question, "Have you ever been denied housing or evicted because you are a lesbian?" Most had never experienced this type of discrimination (87%). Another 7% who had not actually experienced this discrimination directly reported they were afraid that it might happen one day. The 6% who had experienced being denied housing included those who had been turned out of their parents homes as well as those reporting denial of housing in the community. Most communities still fail to provide protection to lesbians from discrimination in this area of basic human need.

While most women reported that their gayness was known where they lived, they were more protective about this identity becoming known in the workplace. Sixty-five percent of those responding (n=947) said that it was not generally known that they were lesbians where they worked. Forty-nine percent simply answered that it was not known, but the other 16% reported fear of discovery and its consequences. Another 1% reported that it was known and that this caused problems for them. Thirty-four percent reported that it is generally known at work that they are lesbians and that this was not a problem for them.

This information contrasts sharply with data from the 1988 NLGHF Lesbian Health Care Survey; only half as many of those respondents (17%) reported being "out" at work. Since lesbians have traditionally moved to large cities in order to gain relative anonymity and relative societal openmindedness, perhaps the SCWU survey's responses reflect the relative safety of a

sophisticated urban environment.

Moving from the current job situation, the survey asked women to tell us if they ever had experienced trouble on any job because they were lesbians. Sixty percent had never experienced any difficulty, while another 30% qualified a no difficulty response by reporting fear of discovery and its consequences. Twenty percent of the women reported they had experienced discrimination that included such consequences as denial of employment, promotions or raises. Other consequences included having access to security clearance blocked and even being blackmailed!

It is interesting that the rate of outness seems to have little to do with the actual amount of discrimination encountered. While 17% of the NLGHF sample were out at work, 13% had lost a job because of being gay, and another 3% had suffered some type of job discrimination (total 16%). The Los Angeles women were 34% out at work, and 20% of the SCWU respondents had suffered job related discrimination.

Lesbians also reported discrimination through being denied specific services or facilities. Most lesbians, as expected, reported they had never experienced actual denial of services because of their lesbianism. Sometimes we become so accustomed to looking for large numbers that we forget the context that must be considered in examining any quantity. Why should a hotel refuse to rent a room to a lesbian? Why should insurance be denied a woman on the basis of her lesbianism.

Stress and Health

Past studies established that gay men and lesbians generally are as healthy emotionally as their nongay counterparts. At the same time, being gay has been cited as a source of stress itself because it is an identity that society does not sanction or support. Gay men and women have few resources to help them establish and maintain relationships, or to support them when a relationship ends. We asked women to tell us about their responses to strains and about the help they received with health problems. Some questions focused on general stress, while others addressed specific health problems, such as menopause.

We asked where women would turn first for help or advice in an emotional crisis (n=980). Without question, most lesbians would first turn to their lovers (51%), while others (19%) would turn to a friend or try to take care of it alone (15%). Other responses included professional counselors (9%), family (2%), straight friends or colleagues (1%) and other (4%).

Ten specific difficulties were identified for women to indicate if they had ever been concerned about developing. We asked each woman to check all that applied, so these numbers will not total 100%. Cited most often was depression (49%), but difficulties around "excesses" also elicited concern from women: drinking to excess (35%); eating to excess (35%); and smoking to excess (34%). Unreasonable fears or extreme anxiety was mentioned by 31% of lesbians, while other feelings also were a source of concern: suicidal feelings (29%) and anger beyond control (24%). The difficulties mentioned least were drug dependency (12%) and loss of contact with reality (13%).

Seventy-four percent of 990 women reported they had sought professional assistance from a counselor or therapist when coping with specific life crises. The specific therapist sought was psychologist (38%); counselor (21%); psychiatrist (20%); social worker (13%); nurse (1%); and other (9%). Women sought help from therapists who were women (n=731; 78%). Women (n=621) did not always know if their therapists were gay: straight (58%); gay (32%); don't know (11%).

Lesbians were referred to their therapists from many sources (n=853), but most found their therapists with the help of a friend (41%), or by themselves (22%). Other referral sources

included physician (5%); gay agency/switchboard (5%); family (2%); minister (1%); other (10%). Fifteen percent indicated the question wasn't applicable to them. Many had seen a therapist more than once in their lives (n=866; 58%). We asked women to tell us all the types of therapy they had, so totals will not equal 100%: individual (71%); group (30%); couple (25%); family (7%); other (3%).

We asked women to check all of the problems that they had sought help for, and the responses checked most often were personal problems (57%); relationship problems (45%); and relationship break-up (31%). Lesbians also sought help for other types of problems: family (18%); sexual (13%); death of someone close (10%); alcohol abuse (9%); drug abuse, other than alcohol (4%); and other (7%).

Nine hundred and fifty-one women answered the specific inquiry, "Have you ever received treatment for the purpose of 'curing' your homosexuality?" The responses were not surprising: yes, but it was not my idea (4%); yes, voluntarily (4%); and no (92%). The results of this "therapy" speak for themselves and of the 74 women who responded to this question: 81% reported no change in their sexual orientation; 14% reported a temporary change to hetero-sexuality; and 5% reported becoming bi-sexual.

Most emotional problems are treated in out-patient settings, whether in a clinic or private office. The treatment of some problems is sometimes more effective in the inpatient setting of a psychiatric unit or hospital. Nine percent (n=967) of the women had received treatment as an inpatient is a psychiatric hospital.

When we developed this questionnaire, reports were beginning to emerge about violence within lesbian relationships, so we developed questions to explore the role of violence in lesbian's lives. We began by asking each woman if she had ever been in a relationship that she could define as battering. Nine hundred and eighty-four women responded: 76% said no; 20% said yes and 4% didn't know. We continued by asking if she was the receiver of violence, and 882 women responded to this question: 23% yes; 26% no; and other 51% said the question wasn't applicable. The next question asked if she were the batterer, and 7% said yes (n=839), while 34% said no. Fifty-nine percent said it wasn't applicable. The numbers in this sequence of questions about involvement in a battering relationship are inconsistent from one section to another. Since the number of women who answered each question decreased as we went along, and the questions asked were about sensitive issues, self-selection may be important in the inconsistency.

When we asked about violence in a continuing relationship (n=680), 92% said it wasn't applicable. Other responses said the violence had stopped (5%) or decreased (2%). Very few women said the violence had increased (0.1%) or not changed (1%). Whether this relationship had ended or was continuing, it was a relationship that had lasted several years: ended relationships had a mean duration of 4.8 years while continuing relationships had a mean duration of 5.3 years.

Family and personal violence are recent topics of study among social scientists, so little is known about the complex mix of emotions involved in violent episodes. Most people believe that anger is linked with violence, although other emotions besides anger may also be involved. We asked women to tell us if they had ever become so angry that they had broken an object as a response to anger, (n=984) and 58% had. We then asked about hitting another person in anger (n=986), and 51% reported they had.

We wanted specific information about violence within a lesbian relationship, so we asked if "you have ever been on the receiving end of violence in a quarrel with your female lover?" We were astonished that 36% (n=971) said they had been recipients of violence from a female lover! We then asked women to tell us how they felt about violence in their current relationship if it were present. Ninety-two percent (n=833) said it wasn't applicable, while most lesbians (7%, or about 54 lesbians) who were in relationships currently involving violence reported that it was

upsetting, but they were working it out.

Our last question explored experience with violence through knowing friends who had experienced violence in lesbian relationships. Specifically, we asked, "If you have never been involved in a relationship where anger toward each other was expressed violently, do you have lesbian friends, now or in the past, that are in such a relationship?" Thirty-eight percent (n=858) replied yes. Responses about knowing friends involved in relationships characterized by violence, and responses from women who reported being on the receiving end of violence in a lesbian relationship tell us that violence is a major presence in the lesbian community.

Following the questions on violence, we refocused the questions to issues about health. In general, women (n=988) reported excellent (46%) or good (45%) health. Eight percent said their health was fair, with the remaining 1% reporting poor health. Answers about exercise level were more varied: (n=989) inadequate (49%); adequate (40%); and only 10% who indicated their exercise level to be more than adequate. We asked women to tell us just how often they did exercise, and only 22% said rarely (n=984), while others exercised at least once or twice a month (15%). Most women exercise more consistently: 25% exercise once or twice a week; 20% several times a week; and 18% almost every day.

Only recently have clinicians and researchers begun to unravel myths about women and menopause by collecting accurate information from women about their experiences. Our data also reflect that few women report severe symptoms of menopause. We asked women to tell us the extent to which they were bothered by each menopause symptom: low, moderate or severe. The symptom reported by most women (n=210) was hot flashes, but 51% said their discomfort was low, 24% moderate, and only 8% severe. One hundred and ninety-five women reported depression with fairly even division between low (42%) and moderate (48%); 11% reported severe depression. Paralleling depression in frequency (n=192), irritability was more bothersome for women: low (34%); moderate (51%); and severe (15%). Many women (n=189) also reported mood swings and many found this symptom distressing: low (34%); moderate (51%); and severe (16%). Backache was experienced by 187 women, but the discomfort caused by backache was a little less likely to be severe: low (51%); moderate (35%); and severe (14%). Headaches, reported by 184 women, was also the least distressing symptom reported: low (69%); moderate (24%); and severe (8%). The range between the most reported symptom (hot flashes), and the least reported symptom (headaches) was small--26 women.

We asked women to answer a series of questions about their primary physician. Twenty-two percent reported not having a physician at all; twenty-four percent reported having a woman as physician, while forty-three percent have a physician who is a man. Another ten percent reported having a gay physician.

Information about stress and health must include some information about sexual problems, so we asked women to check all responses that applied to them: 46% reported no problems by indicating that none of the problems listed applied. The problem identified by the largest number of women (21%) was that she was not interested in sex as much as she would like to be. Another 10% reported that they enjoy sexual activity, but rarely have orgasms. Responses for other sexual problems were scattered: I'm interested in sex too often (6%); Even when I have orgasms, I do not feel satisfied sexually (4%); and, I arouse very easily and have orgasms very early--too early for my partner(s) (4%). One percent identified having the problem, "I have to almost force myself to have sex, as I am really turned off by sex." Another 15% reported other problems.

Most women (45%) did not know if their births were easy or difficult (n=731), but easy births were reported by a few more women (29%) than were difficult births (26%). Eighty-seven percent reported normal births (n=511), compared with 9% cesarean births and 5% breach births.

Sex change operations are rare, but do occur. Most women (98%) had not had a sex change operation and were not considering it (n=980), while 2% reported considering it, and 0.3% reported having a male to female operation.

Venereal disease was reported at low rates among lesbians in this survey: 91% had never had a venereal disease; 6% had a sexually transmitted disease that they had contracted from a man; 2% had been infected with a sexually transmitted disease they had contracted from a woman.

Serious and enduring health problems drain emotional and tangible resources. Sixty-six percent had never experienced such a problem. Thirteen percent reported still having a health problem that had begun in adulthood, while another 11% had such an illness during adulthood, but no longer had the problem. Nine percent reported having this type of health problem as a child, but not now. Another 5% had a serious and enduring health problem as a child and that problem continues in their adult life.

We asked women to tell us about their menstrual periods currently. This question asked women to check all that applied, so responses will not tally to 100%. Eleven percent had hysterectomies and another 10% had reached menopause. A large number of women (66%) reported menstrual periods that are usually regular, while 11% said theirs were irregular. When asked about adolescence versus now, 10% said periods were painful during adolescence, but okey now; 19% reported painful experiences throughout adolescence and adulthood; 6% began with okey periods, then moved into painful periods now.

After asking about menstrual periods, we returned to further questions about menopause. A small number of respondents answered this question (n=594), and 75% of those indicated menopause questions were not applicable to them. Others reported few problems with menopause. Fourteen percent said they were still in menopause and were having no major problems, and another 6% said that menopause was over and was fairly easy. Those reporting difficulties rated the problems as mild: 4% said menopause was not particularly difficult, but they used medication for assistance. Two percent said menopause was difficult, and they used medication for assistance, and another 0.2% said that it was difficult, but they handled it without medication. When women used medication they used hormones more often than any other type of medicine (n=63): nerve medicines (n=11), antidepressants (n=10) and others (n=23).

Lesbians in this survey generally have few health problems, and they tend to seek assistance when they need help. Exposure to violence in lesbian contexts was surprisingly high, but figures about prevalence of violence among various population groups has not been available, and continue to be largely guesswork and rough estimates.

Some more or less directly comparable highlights about stress and health (and physical abuse) from the NLGHF National Lesbian Health Care Survey include the following:

--The most common mental health problem experienced was depression; 37% reported it now or in the past (SCWU Survey 49%)

--The most common physical problem experienced was bad cramps; 38% reporting cramps at some time, and 24% at the time of the survey (SCWU Survey 35%)

--Suicidal thoughts had been experienced by 21% of the respondents (SCWU Survey 29%)

--A remarkable 75% of the women were in counseling either at the time of the survey or in the past (SCWU Survey 74%). The Summary and Research Implications Section of the NLGHF Report (pp. 110-115) comments extensively on this seemingly large proportion of

women seeking help.

--Twenty-two percent of the NLGHF women had been physically abused as adults (SCWU Survey 20%). The most likely perpetrator was a lover, sex unspecified (53%), or a husband (27%). SCWU results do not compare directly; both surveys asked about this issue in what proved to be rather clumsy and unspecific ways--perhaps a reflection of our discomfort with the issue. The inconsistent responses from question to question possibly reflect the same discomfort among the respondents. What is very clear however, from both surveys, is the prevalence of violence in our lives, even though as lesbians we had long thought ourselves immune.

The Lesbian Experience

Being a person. Being a woman. Being a lesbian. For some, being a lesbian is a private experience that is shared with a select few. Others place this part of their being more centrally, and they organize much of their lives around this portion of their identity. Lesbian experiences that we asked respondents about in this section of the questionnaire included leisure time activities, formal organization membership, sexual orientation, and knowledge of their gay identity by others.

As we mature, our relationships with parents undergo many revisions. Telling parents we are gay is scary because we are uncertain of the nature of the "revision in relationship" that may result. Nearly half of the 957 respondents (49%) had not told their parents they were gay. Most women who did tell their parents found some acceptance eventually: they had already guessed it, so it wasn't much of a problem (14%); they were unhappy at first, then it straightened out (13%); they were very supportive and understanding (11%). Others met responses that many of us fear and dread: they were unhappy at first, and are still pretty upset (11%); they could not accept it and told me not to come back until "I changed" (3%). When we asked if parents knew even if they hadn't been told, 43% of the respondents (n=812) said the question wasn't applicable. For those who had not told their parents, 21% believed that one parent knew anyway and another 15% believed that both parents knew. Only 21% believed that neither parent knew.

Most of the respondents (n=984) lived with a female lover (50%) or alone (30%). Most other responses were divided between "with a friend" (11%) or with family members (8%), but a few women reported different living arrangements: with a husband (0.7%), with several female lovers (0.6%), or with a male lover (0.4%).

Longevity of relationships is a topic that intrigues both gay men and lesbians because of the "gay relationships don't last" stereotype. When we asked women (n=984) to report how long they had been lovers (if they currently had a lover), most women indicated they had been lovers for 1-5 years (37%). Few women reported they had been lovers over 10 years (4%), while 28% said they did not have a lover currently. Twenty-one percent had been lovers under one year and another 10% had been lovers for 5-10 years. Maintaining intimate relationships over time is difficult under the best of circumstances, and few respondents (14%) reported their current relationship had lasted more than five years. Blumstein and Schwartz (American Couples, Wm. Morrow and Co., Inc., 1983) found that lesbians maintained the shortest relationships among couples examined in their study (married heterosexuals, unmarried heterosexual couples, and gay men).

Sixty-nine percent reported (n=980) they had never been into role playing; others had role-played formerly, but no longer did (10% butch and 4% femme). A minority of respondents continue their role identifications: 4% each said they had always been and continued to be butch

or femme. One percent said they were beginning to become interested in role playing. The other 9% of the responses were "not applicable" and "other."

Having an orgasm is one part of making love, and it is important to many women. Sixty-three percent of the respondents (n=966) said they always or almost always have an orgasm when making love with a woman, while another 25% said they usually have several orgasms. Twelve percent indicated they never, or almost never have an orgasm.

The gay community in metropolitan areas offers many opportunities for involvement. We asked how often women participated in activities or businesses that were gay oriented. Respondents reported their degree of involvement by checking one of the following categories for each listed activity: never, seldom, sometimes or frequently. Never and seldom have been combined into the category of less involved; sometimes and frequently were combined to form the category of more involved.

Activity	More Involved	Less Involved
Read gay/lesbian publications	18%	82%
Go to gay bars/discos	46%	54%
Attend gay religious services	86%	14%
Eat out at a gay restaurant	48%	52%
Stay in gay motel	76%	24%
Attend gay entertainment	39%	61%
Support gay businesses	24%	76%
Attend gay fundraisers	40%	60%

We also asked respondents to indicate all types of lesbian or gay organizations that they belonged to. Twenty-six percent did not belong to any organizations. Research committee members were pleased with this response, since it helped to assure us that our network sampling method had succeeded in reaching lesbians who were not affiliated with formal gay/lesbian organizations (see Research Methods and Procedures for a more complete discussion of sampling). The introduction to the questionnaire asked women if they were members of SCWU, and 37% indicated they were. This membership was reflected again in the 37% of the women who indicated that they belonged to a lesbian social organization. It also may have inflated the responses in the category of lesbian educational organization (31%), since SCWU has the dual focus of educational activities and lifestyle support activities. Fifteen percent belonged to lesbian political organizations. Thirty percent belonged to a feminist organization, with 6% reporting membership in a gay or lesbian caucus within a heterosexual organization. Many gay organizations are co-sexual, and women reported membership in these: educational (17%), political (12%), and social (13%).

The responses to the question, "Who knows you're gay? Check all that apply," clearly indicate that lesbians in this survey were out to someone besides their lovers. Lesbians are out most often to gay friends (94%) and some non-gay friends (85%), followed by some family members (72%). Surprisingly, 61% were out to some co-workers. Thirty-eight percent were even out to some of their neighbors. Twenty-four percent responded that they were out to almost everybody.

Asked specifically about personally coming out to their families, most women (n=980) had come out to some family members under various circumstances: yes, only after I was accused (8%); yes, because I thought they suspected (6%); and yes, I volunteered the information (59%). Twenty-seven percent had not personally come out to anyone in their families.

The NLGHF survey reports that 19% were not out to anyone in their families, while the

SCWU figure is 28%. Twenty-nine percent of the NLGHF women has told none of their co-workers: SCWU showed 39%. This difference could well be accounted for by the increasing awareness of gay issues that society has experienced in the past eight years.

We asked women to rate their sexual orientation much as the respondents had in the Kinsey survey, i.e. based on psychological reactions as well as current activities and experiences. Respondents (n=981) used a seven point scale that ranged from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively lesbian in orientation. Ninety-five percent responded that their orientation was primarily or exclusively lesbian from the last three points on that scale.

In response to the question, "Who initiated your first sexual experience with a woman?" 28% (n=990) initiated that first contact themselves. Other women reported this first experience was initiated by someone of the same age (33%), someone older than self (25%), and someone younger than self (14%).

What influences a person's gay orientation--genes, environmental and social factors, free choice? Most women (36%) responded that they didn't know what caused them to be gay (n=953). While "don't know" was the most popular choice among the available categories, no consensus emerged: born gay (27%); conscious choice (24%) and environmental influences (11%).

What type of relationship do women prefer, and is this preference what they usually have? More women responded with their preferences (n=962) than with their usual relationship patterns (n=859). Preference and reality were not perfectly correlated, and in some categories the differences were great:

Type of Relationship	Prefer	Usual	Difference
Long term, close relationship	87%	65%	22%
Series of intense affairs	2%	11%	9%
Short term, close commitment	1%	17%	16%
One night stands	0%	2%	2%
An open relationship	8%	3%	5%
Traditional marriage plus lesbian lover		1%	1%

Clearly, lesbians prefer close ongoing relationship, and a large number reported having this type of relationship.

The final question listed many different categories of family members and teachers, and asked women to tell us if they knew or suspected that any of these people were gay. High school teachers (47%) and college professors (41%) were cited most often. The family member cited most was cousin (27%).

SELECTED ISSUES

LESBIAN VIOLENCE

Judith M. Saunders and Bunny MacCulloch

This chapter will report on the findings from the questions included in the SCWU survey that related to violence. Additionally, it will set the context for the findings by briefly looking at the prevalence of family violence in America.

Introduction

A close friend sought refuge with me one evening after she had been beaten up by her lover. I knew and loved both women and was truly stunned that this could happen to people I knew and that it could happen between lesbians. A few weeks later a different friend appeared at my door to seek shelter after she and her lover had engaged in a fight that included violence. Several months elapsed, and my first friend once again appeared for help; this time she had been injured sufficiently that she required treatment at an emergency room.

I had never before been forced to question that the violence within spousal relationships might also be a feature of a lesbian couple relationship. I wasn't ignorant about wife beating. I knew that one of its primary tenets held that wife beating was associated with an imbalance in power distribution within the male-female relationship, whether this relationship involved marriage or cohabiting couples. I also knew that shelters for battered wives were being established, and that information from current studies showed violence within the home to be a more common occurrence than had ever been imagined. I knew that this violence within the home was no respecter of class or race boundaries, as had been believed previously. Despite this knowledge, I had somehow perceived this violence to be something that afflicted them--those heterosexual couples.

After the experiences with my two friends who sought shelter with me, I spoke with a woman who coordinated agencies involved with violence against women, and I asked her about violence within same sex couples. She said she knew a few appeals for help had come in recently, and that resources to aid lesbians and gay men with domestic violence problems were almost nonexistent.

I raised three issues each time I discussed lesbians and violence: (1) What was the extent of violence within lesbian relationships? (2) Did violence within same sex relationships depart from the major theory base of violence existing in and growing out of an inequity of power distribution across the sexes (3) If we have women in relationships where violence was recurrent, what community services are available to them?

I knew that I needed to rethink my stereotype of the victim of wife battering: a woman victimized by the physical strength of her husband, by reduced access to financial and community resources, by an eroded sense of her ability and worth, and by the social shame of the situation. Aside from social shame, the only circumstance that seemed to fit a lesbian who had been beaten (of the two I had known) was that the people involved loved each other and wanted to try to work things out. This has also been true for heterosexual couples.

At this time, the late 1970s, I couldn't locate any published information on violence in same sex couples. I called a friend in another state who was knowledgeable about wife beating and indeed, worked within this field. I asked her to consider studying and writing about violence in lesbian couple relationships. She confirmed that this was an area where more knowledge was

needed. She agreed "to think" over designing and doing a study. But when she called back the next week, she said she did not believe the lesbian community would be well served by this effort. She explained that we would be too vulnerable to misinterpretation of the information. Right wing, conservative factions might exploit any information resulting from the study. I knew her to be a caring lesbian feminist, and did not dismiss her concerns lightly. Indeed, I found her concerns echoed often among lesbians when I tried to discuss the possible problem. The general agreement was that this concern belonged in the closet. Disbelief and denial joined forces to keep this in the closet for several years before a scattering of anecdotal articles began appearing in the gay and lesbian press. No groundswell of interest emerged from these articles, either from those right wing antagonists to exploit this revealed community flaw, or from our own community protagonists who might reasonably be concerned. The survey was conducted before articles appeared, when denial and disbelief greeted discussions of lesbian violence. Clearly data were needed to help form a knowledge base about lesbian violence.

While the SCWU survey could not explore violence among lesbians in depth, we decided nevertheless to determine how widespread, or prevalent, violence was within the lesbian community we sampled. We developed questions that explored general acting out of anger, then asked about violence within relationships (without specifying whether the relationship was lesbian). We then developed a series of questions about violence within a lesbian relationship, experienced either directly, or indirectly, through having friends involved in relationships that included violence.

In order to understand family violence as it pertains to lesbian violence we will review the current theories about family violence, highlight the known characteristics of lesbian relationships, and then try to see how the two (family violence theory and the characteristics of lesbian relationships) fit together.

Prevalence of Family Violence

The concept of privacy, the idea of family inviolability, and paternalism have long kept violence hidden from public view. Family privacy has been guarded by men and women alike who believe the tradition of family must be maintained in its paternalistic structure, despite the evidence that has emerged over the past ten years that has established the family as the greatest arena for violence within a violent society that condones physical force to settle disagreement and conflict. Family violence includes wife battering, child abuse, parent abuse and sibling abuse. In Scream Quietly or the Neighbors Will Hear, Pizey (1977) established that regard for the privacy of the family did not mean that neighbors did not know of the violence near them; they simply feigned ignorance, and through this pretense, they succeeded in maintaining the tradition of family privacy. Both increasing evidence of child abuse and the publication of Martin's book (1979) signaled the end of the portrayal of family as a safe refuge in America.

The evidence has accumulated rapidly that the family is the nation's primary warehouse of violent behavior. As succinctly stated by Straus, "Leaving aside war and riots, physical aggression occurs among family members more often than it occurs among any others." (1974) One factor that complicates the problem of understanding violence is that statistics to establish the actual prevalence of family violence are difficult to find. For example, one study of wife battering in Scotland found that only two out of every ninety-eight wife assaults were reported to the police (Dobash and Dobash 1979). To illustrate the magnitude of wife-battering in America, one source reported that it is estimated that six million wives will be abused this year by their husbands and approximately two to four thousand women will be beaten to death. Wife battering alone is the greatest cause of injury to women, ranking above rapes or muggings or auto accidents (Northwest

Women's Report 3(5),p. 5. 1984).

A second factor complicating our comprehensive understanding of the prevalence of battering is that there is no clear definition of battering. If only physical violence between humans is accepted as a definition of battering, then verbal abuse and destruction of property, or threats of any of these are omitted, as are sexual threats and sexual acts of violence. Also, it is not clearly understood when violence becomes battering: is it appropriate to refer to a single act of violence as battering, or does violence need to be repetitive, and fulfill other characteristics to qualify as "battering?" The term battering is used both ways; sometimes it is used only when a pattern of violence has been established through repeated incidents, while other discussions do not emphasize this pattern when discussing battering.

A final factor in understanding the scope of family violence is lack of agreement on whether or not the same dynamics are found in all types of family violence, regardless of whether the recipient of the violence is the wife, child, parent or sibling. This confusion becomes manifest when trying to determine a schema for compiling and reporting incidents. Most reports seem to categorize family violence under the "victim" headings, and do not report aggregates of all family violence.

Society seems to hold conflicting values about violence according to a complex, and not yet understood, set of factors. Slapping a kid around who is "asking stupid questions over and over" may not be perceived by all as child abuse, whereas slapping a disoriented parent for asking stupid, repetitive questions would generally be seen as abuse. Once violence is condoned as a valid response to family discord, it becomes confusing to determine when violence is within family rights and traditions and when it is excessive, or misdirected--when it has crossed over into abuse.

All these discussions of family violence have in common the consideration of violence within the traditionally structured family in America. The term "wife battering" is used to describe violence directed toward the woman who is living with a man even when they are not actually married. The lesbian or gay couple represents a much more distinct departure from society's traditionally structured family than does the cohabiting unmarried heterosexual couple. When neighbors know of violence within a gay or lesbian relationship they are likely to feign ignorance both of the relationship and of the violence within it. Their motive for so doing may nonetheless emanate from a desire to preserve the sanctity of the traditional American family and its attendant privacy.

Violence does exist within lesbian and gay couples. As was true in the heterosexual community, the gay and lesbian community responded initially with efforts to deny knowledge of this violence, and then attempted to block efforts to expose it. Although anecdotal reports of this violence began to emerge in the early 1980s, no estimates of the prevalence of violence within gay or lesbian coupled relationships exist.

The SCWU Report on Lesbian Violence

In an effort to learn more about lesbians' experiences with violence, the SCWU survey included several questions about it. Some of these questions were directed toward the general relationship between violence and anger; others solicited information about violence in relationships, but did not specify lesbian relationships. Finally, some questions asked about violence within lesbian relationships. The questionnaire used terms such as violence, battering, anger, without defining the terms. Each woman who answered the questionnaire was free to define the terms as seemed appropriate to her, and this may have increased the variability of responses.

Sixty percent of the women responded that they had become so angry that they had

broken an object in anger. Fifty percent reported they had hit another person in anger. The relationship of anger to violence is a poorly understood alliance, although general opinion supports the belief that the two are related. Since the advent of psychoanalysis, psychotherapists have encouraged the ventilation of feelings, including anger. Tavris questioned this tenet through her observation, "I notice that the people who are most prone to give vent to their rages get angrier, not less angry." (1982:121). Whatever relationship exists between violence and anger, most of the SCWU respondents had expressed their anger violently by destroying property or by hitting another person.

Fewer respondents were involved in violence in the context of a relationship: over a fifth of the sample had been in a relationship they defined as battering. Those who identified themselves as the receivers of violence (n=202) plus those who identified themselves as the batterers (n=60) exceeded the total number of battered relationships. Also, lesbians may see themselves as both batterer and batteree, i.e., the batteree feels so guilty about hitting back that she says she batters too! Later on as her awareness unfolds, she often revises this assessment. This is a direct function of how the respondents defined the terms, since it is possible to be the recipient of violence in a relationship without defining the relationship as a battering one.

Whatever definition of battering is used, the statistics are frightening. Too many lesbians are victims of violence, whether this was a relationship where the woman was with another woman, or with a man (41% of the lesbians in this survey had once been married to or lived with a man).

Thirty-six percent of the women reported receiving violence from a female lover. Data were not obtained to clarify if this violence was a recurring, or an isolated, event for those who experienced it. Those 327 lesbians who identified themselves as never having been in a violent relationship with anyone, nevertheless indicated they knew lesbian friends who are, or were, in a relationship where violence occurs. Gelles (1974), in his in-depth study of 80 families, found that about fifty-six percent of the heterosexual couples had used physical force on each other at some time in their relationship. There is no way to directly compare Gelles' data with the SCWU survey data, but both sources clearly indicate a high occurrence of violence within intimate, couple relationships. When one third of the respondents have indicated they have received violence from a female lover, and another third indicate they have had lesbian friends involved in violent relationships, it is apparent that violence is no stranger to these relationships of women who love women.

For those respondents who indicated that they were in a relationship where battering was involved, and the relationship was a continuing one (about 53 respondents), well over half (n=36) said the battering had stopped; another eleven said it had decreased. Only four said there was no change in the battering within their relationship.

Another question was directed toward violence in current relationships, and asked how the women felt about it. Seventy one women indicated they were currently in a relationship where violence occurred; most of these women (n=54) indicated that it was upsetting and they were working on it; six responded they were breaking up soon; five accepted the violence as "no big deal" and another five did not know what to do about it.

In summary, the SCWU survey found that a majority of lesbians in this survey had expressed anger, at some time in their lives, through destruction of property or through hitting another person. A staggering 200 lesbians had been in a relationship they considered battering, whatever definition they used! Sixty women labeled themselves as the batterer. Two hundred women identified themselves as the recipient of violence. Only 53 respondents indicated this battering relationship was a continuing relationship, and 36 of them said the violence had stopped.

When asked if they had received violence in quarrels with female lovers (the question did

not use the label "battering"), 350 women responded that they had received violence from their lovers. Another 327 reported having lesbian friends who were at that time, or previously had been in relationships where violence occurred. Seventy percent of the total sample either experienced violence directly from another woman, or knew of such violence within lesbian relationships. Awareness of violence in the lesbian community is high by any standard!

Overview of Existing Theories

Coercive violence within lesbian relationships has begun to emerge from secrecy and silence: lesbian newspapers are publishing articles about lesbian violence, workshops are being conducted, victims are telling and writing their histories of violence, studies are being conducted, and books and chapters are being written. We hope that all this beginning activity will culminate in our understanding of how loving relationships between women become violent with by-products of pain and shame where both women are victimized.

Existing theories from the past twenty years have added to our knowledge of violence, but so far no one theory has emerged to unify our understanding of violence within intimate, family relationships. All existing theories have been formulated out of the traditional family context, and they all attempt to explain some facet of violence within in that context.

The consideration of family violence was triggered from increasing evidence of child abuse, and the recognition of a need to protect those children. In the 1960s both clinicians and researchers focused their attention on the battered child, and on the parents who were seen as psychologically impaired. During this time a perspective of generational repetition was formulated that asserts that parents who are abusers are likely to have been abused themselves as children. From the awareness of child abuse, the concept of family violence has grown to include wife battering, parent abuse and sibling abuse. In trying to understand the coercive violence that sometimes occurs within lesbian couple relationships, only the family violence literature that addresses violence within relationships of cohabiting couples will be considered. While the other forms of family violence are important, this narrower focus is more likely to facilitate an understanding of violence within lesbian couple relationships. The literature on wife battering does consider violence within the context of two adults who are involved in a couple relationship, and that commonality makes it reasonable to use male-female derived theories that do exist as a starting point for understanding violence within lesbian relationships. Perhaps a partial understanding can emerge, and we can see where the theory base fits, and where it fails.

The early psychological literature on wife battering tended to focus on the victim's psychopathology and subsequently her participation in precipitating and causing her own battering, such as the article by Snell, Rosenwald and Robey (1964). In the mid 1970s, this was reminiscent of the explanation of the dynamics of the woman who was raped. New studies emerged and literature written by feminists questioned the existing theory base. The literature that issued from sociological studies of wife battering in the 1970s provided an alternate to the psychopathologic perspectives which had previously dominated the theory base for wife battering. One of the early theories asserted very simply that the cultural norms in our society permit wifebeating (Gelles, Straus 1972), and said that the marriage license is also a hitting license. This structural theory of violence identifies woman battering as only one of many manifestations of violence learned in the family. (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974). The family, then, provides the basic orientation that results in a new supply of "recruits" who have learned to value violence and who have become skilled in the art of violence in their daily lives. Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1976) view all types of family violence as emerging from a similar origin, i.e., rooted in a violent society. This common origin essentially normalizes violence, occurring as it does within a society that includes a valuing

of violence as part of its social norms. This perspective postulates a common stem for child abuse and for parent abuse and for wife abuse and so on. Gelles (1974) found that over 50% of couples have used physical force on each other at some time, and that 25% do so repeatedly. Stark and McEvoy (1970) found that both men and women approved of slapping one's spouse, and this rate of approval is considerable! This study did find, however, that more men approved of slapping one's spouse than did women. It also found that as socioeconomic status increased, so did the likelihood that couples would approve of slapping one's spouse--contrary to general belief that approval of slapping one's spouse is associated with lower socioeconomic status.

Goode (1971) has maintained that force may be necessary to uphold family authority. While he deplored the excessive use of force in a family, he still asserts that force and violence are foundation blocks for the existing family system, and Straus (1974) has agreed with this position.

This structural theory of violence, in summary, has documented convincingly that violence within families occurs with great frequency. An important tenet of this theory is that family violence that results in different categories of victims (children, wives, etc) shares common determinants and is culturally condoned. Even further, maintaining the structure of authority within families may require the use of force, and that force becomes violent at times.

Others have criticized this stance of homogeneity of determinants of family violence and state emphatically that several types of violence occur within the family. While the different family violence types may share some common characteristics, they cannot be perceived as having common determinants. (Bandura 1973; Dobash and Dobash 1978). Once a global view of common determinants of family violence is exchanged for the perspective of specific determinants, then other perspectives on the dynamics of family violence emerge. For example, Dobash and Dobash (1978) look at the role of violence as a behavior that is desirable to support a patriarchal family within a patriarchal society. They carefully charted the legal, religious and cultural legacies over time that have supported a hierarchical distribution of power. In their schema, women are subordinate, and violence against women is legitimized (Dobash and Dobash,1978). They also found that violence between cohabiting couples was overwhelmingly in the direction of male violent acts against females. They argue that violence is not so much a breakdown in social order where individuals have been viewed as deviant; rather, violence has been used by men against women to establish or maintain a patriarchal social order.

Pagelow (1981) moved the search for understanding violence in intimate relationships out from society and into the dynamics of couple relationships in order to try to explain why violence occurs and escalates in some couple relationships and not others. She draws upon Lemert's theory that conceptualizes deviance as a process (1951, 1972). Basic to her study and theory formulations are the conditions that must exist for battering to occur in the first place. She indicates two conditions for men, "On the part of male spouses, this model proposes (1) learned acceptance of the use of violence in conjugal relationships, and (2) strong commitment to traditional ideology." Traditional ideology calls for a belief in the family power being ordered as the man in charge, and the rest of the family (wife and children) as subordinate. The conditions for battering that she cites for women are, "On the part of female spouses, the predicting variables are (1) willingness to invest in their relationships and (2) strong commitment to traditional ideology." (1981:43) Many couples who meet these two conditions may never experience violence. Once violence does occur, the consequences are largely predictive as to whether or not the battering will continue. Specifically, if there is neither retaliation nor termination of the relationship, the batterer is likely to continue battering. Once a pattern of battering is established, an escalation in frequency and intensity over time will certainly follow (Pagelow, 1981:45). Pagelow's model also addresses the question, Once battering is a pattern of the relationship, why do women stay? She postulates the

following, "The fewer the resources, the more negative the institutional response; and the more intense the traditional ideology of women who have been battered, the more likely they are to remain in relationships with the batterers and the less likely they are to perform acts that significantly alter the situation in a positive direction." (1981:46) Precisely these women who value marriage, and who have few resources available to them outside the marriage, are most vulnerable to being trapped in a scene of domesticity that is distorted through increasing violence.

Walker (1978) moves us from the dynamics of couples back to psychology in her attempt to understand wife battering. Her perspective offers a vastly different position from psychology's earlier stance of finding pathology in the victim. Her theory is "learned helplessness", a social learning framework from behaviorist psychology. This theory tells us that even if a person has control over her or his own response and over the outcome it produces, but believes that control does not and cannot exist, then that person responds according to a learned helplessness model. In other words, the actual ability to control the situation is less important than the belief and expectation the person has, i.e., the meaning of the situation to the person. Walker also speculates that learned helplessness may exist on a continuum. She identifies three cycles of a battering relationship for this continuum: the tension building phase; the explosion of acute battering incidents; and the calm loving respite. Walker maintains it is the psychological paralysis that emerges from this learned helplessness that keeps the woman in the victim status as a battered woman.

The theories reviewed thus far have told us that (1) the explanation of the violent act is often found in the psychopathology of the victim; (2) violence is a cultural norm that is enacted within the family and (3) violence between cohabiting couples occurs with its frequency and direction (male to female) because it is behavior in the service of maintaining a patriarchal family system within a patriarchal society.

Breines and Gordon argue that "most scholarship on family violence has a weak understanding of family, or gender, and of power." (1983:492) They define the feminist perspective on family violence as a historical phenomenon produced within a gendered society in which male power dominates. Their excellent review of the existing literature on family violence finds most theory wanting, either from being viewed without attention to historical bonds, or more especially, without consideration of violence as produced in a gendered society in which male power dominates (1983).

Lesbian Coupled Relationships

When a lesbian admits to herself that she is a lesbian, she has taken a step that may seem to reject the traditional family values predominant in American culture. When taking that step, the same lesbian does not, indeed cannot, throw away all the values she learned within her family setting. Most of those values are incorporated into her life without further thought, unless some situation arises to stimulate reflection and reevaluation of the values. Values that guide how a couple behave with each other have been learned largely during childhood from observing parents. Children observe how affection is demonstrated and how conflict is managed. Most of us form our value foundations from the experiences we have during childhood, although we do not grow up with value systems that are mirror-images of our families. Most lesbians grow up in traditional families that are characterized by hierarchical power distribution, with the man (father, husband, son and brother) having more power, and the woman (wife, mother, daughter and sister) having less, and often indirect, power. While lesbians internalize many of the values they learn during childhood from their families and from others as they progress through childhood and education, they are able to stand apart from these values sufficiently to recognize their difference as lesbians.

Some values remain intact from childhood, while other values are re-shaped to fit new interests and concerns. Some values do not survive the power of critical reflection, and are discarded. Little is known about the process of retaining, reshaping and discarding values that occurs both automatically and deliberately during the child's gradual transformation into adulthood.

As lesbians establish coupled relationships, they take with them some of the values they learned in their own traditional families about how couples behave with each other. They take into these relationships the knowledge that theirs is a departure from the relationship they knew their parents to have. A critical difference is that they both are women, and they bring with them to the relationship the values, expectations and styles of women. While cohabiting heterosexual couples who are not married have been being given increased recognition and sanction by society and by the courts, there is little evidence that this acceptance and sanction has extended to cohabiting couples of the same sex, whether men or women (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983:39). Lesbians take with them into their relationship the knowledge that society judges the relationship as flawed, if not unacceptable. Recently, some studies have identified certain characteristics that distinguish lesbian relationships from others, and also identify some of the characteristics that lesbian relationships hold in common with other types of couple relationships.

Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) provided a comparison of values and practices among heterosexual couples (married and unmarried), and among couples of gay men and of lesbians around work, money and sex. The least conflict occurred for all types of couples when each partner in the relationship had an equal influence over money spending decisions. However, they found that income amount established the balance of power in all relationships, except those between lesbian couples. Lesbians are likely to use income to avoid unequal dependence in a relationship, rather than to establish dominance. When lesbian couples paralleled married couples in their financial arrangements (i.e., through financial intertwinement) the women gained a sense of permanence, but developed more room for conflict. Other studies have found that lesbians desire power equality in relationships, rather than preferring one partner to be dominant (Wolf 1979; Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton 1983).

Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found both similarities and differences between same sex couples and heterosexual couples in relation to work. Lesbians, like gay men, believe both partners should work. Similar to heterosexual couples, lesbians tended to have one partner who was more work centered and one who was more relationship centered. Same sex couples tended to share more leisure time activities than do heterosexual couples; this seems to imply that gay couples combine the needs for friendship and romantic love within one relationship.

It was in the area of sex that Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found lesbians to be the most distinctive, both from heterosexual couples and from gay male couples. Lesbians tended to have sex less frequently at every stage of their relationship than did either heterosexual couples or gay male couples. This finding was in relation to genital sex. They found a major value difference, in that lesbians prize nongenital physical contact and consider nongenital activities as satisfying within themselves, not just as a prelude to genital sex. In both lesbian and gay male couples, the more emotionally expressive partner is more likely to initiate sex. Refusing sex may be a way to exhibit power in a relationship, as much as it is an expression of actual disinterest in sex at that moment. Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found that while same sex couples do not have a power imbalance based on gender, sexual refusal worked the same way in the same sex relationships as it had in heterosexual relationships. They also found that the person in the relationship who gains power by being less in love is more likely to refuse to have sex.

Lesbians form monogamous relationships that, unlike gay male relationships, generally do not include the option of outside sex. When lesbians have been together more than ten years, there seems to be some increased likelihood that one partner will have an affair (Blumstein and

Schwartz, 1983). They also reported that lesbians are less interested and less involved in casual sex, and are more likely, as are heterosexual women, to have sex when there is also an emotional commitment with the other person. In general, lesbians form, and prefer monogamous coupled relationships though there is a contradictory commitment to independence and sexual freedom for each person.

Caldwell and Peplau (1984) found that most lesbian couples desired relationships where both women hold equal power. Most couples reported they were in relationships with equal power distribution; but nearly 40% reported their relationships to have unequal power distribution. Since they used social exchange theory as the base for their study, power in a relationship was determined by which partner in the relationship was less involved, or less interested, in the relationship. The partner with the least involvement was the partner with the greater power. Additionally, relative resources, such as educational level, income prestige, or social class also impact power distribution within relationships. Their findings supported their hypotheses from their theory base that lesbians with less involvement in the relationship, greater income and higher education would have more power in relationships where an unequal power distribution existed.

Another feature of lesbian couple relationships is the role of friendship within the relationship. Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) implied that lesbian and gay couples combine the needs for friendship and for romantic love within one relationship. Vetere (1983) found friendship to be the prime developmental and maintenance factor in women's relationships. The elements identified by the women in her study as characterizing close friends were: self-disclosure, someone to have fun with, honesty and trust, communication and understanding, mutual support, shared interests and beliefs and affection. Most women in her study identified their current lover as their closest friend. Most of the women also reported they were friends with their current lover before they became lovers. Vetere (1983:60) and Wolf (1979) reported that lesbians continue their friendships with women after they have stopped being lovers, and that this network of ex-lovers as friends is a critical support network for lesbians.

The SCWU survey found that almost ninety percent of lesbians preferred relationships that involved a long term, close commitment; and sixty-five percent of the lesbians indicated this was their usual type of relationship. The reality of their actual relationship status when they completed the questionnaire for this study was that twenty-eight percent were not involved in a relationship, twenty-one percent were in a relationship less than one year; thirty-seven percent were in a relationship for one year; thirty-seven percent were in a relationship for one to five years; and fourteen percent were in a relationship of over five years duration. Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found that lesbian relationships in their study were of slightly shorter durations, on the average, than was true for either gay men or heterosexual married couples.

In summary, lesbians prefer relationships that distribute power equally within the relationship. Lesbians tend to use money in relationships to avoid unequal dependence, rather than to establish dominance. Lesbians prize nongenital sex contact as satisfying in itself, not just as a prelude to genital sex; and lesbians were found to have genital sex less often than other types of couples. As with other types of couples, lesbians may use refusal of sex to exhibit power within the relationship. While lesbians prefer, and say they usually have long term, close commitment relationships, data from the SCWU survey found most lesbians were in relationships that were of less than five years duration. Blumstein and Schwartz found lesbians were in relationships of shorter duration than any other couple relationship except the cohabiting heterosexual couple. All lesbians in relationships have not succeeded in forming relationships where power is distributed equally. When there is unequal power distribution, less investment in the relationship and greater resources, such as higher education and income level are associated with greater power. Love and friendship are likely to be major coordinates within a lesbian relationship.

Battering in Lesbian Couple Relationships

Recently lesbians have begun to break the silence about violence within lesbian relationships. They are telling and writing their histories and some of these have appeared in the lesbian and gay press. As was true in the early literature on wife battering, these initial accounts most often relate the story of the person who received the violence, and do not include the history of the person who initiated the battering. A brief account of one relationship is presented, followed by a discussion of battering in lesbian relationships, as reported in the gay and lesbian press.

Jane stayed with Karen four and one half years. The battering began very soon after they moved in together. "The first time it happened she threw me to the floor and started kicking me in the stomach. I couldn't believe it was happening. Afterwards she was so sorry and she promised it would never happen again. I believed her, despite everything I knew. I had been in relationships with several other women before this, but I had never been so much in love ever before. Karen was the most exciting woman I had known. Her beauty was delicate, she was so bright and creative. Once the violence began, it accelerated very quickly. She was drinking a lot. She had been abused by her mother when she was a child, and she said I reminded her of her mother. But really, almost anything could trigger violence and verbal abuse. I remember pouring a cup of coffee one morning, and I spilled a little on the table. She threw everything, all the dishes, everything, on the floor. I remember being in that little apartment soon after all this began and crying and asking, Why, when I am so much in love, does it have to be with a woman who is so crazy? A telephone call from my children was certain to trigger an episode, so I stopped having contact with them. I tried to be very careful not to do anything that would precipitate her violence. Holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries would always contain drinking and violence, despite anything I could do. I was frightened for my life. Once she got a gun and was shooting wildly around the house. When she passed out, I got rid of the gun. I was so afraid. She would take some part out of the car, so I couldn't leave. She broke my glasses over and over, without them I couldn't see. I had no one left to call. I felt trapped. Like a prisoner. She kept being so contrite, and promising to stop. I wanted to believe her. I loved her so much. We went to counseling, but Karen denied having any problems. I learned a lot about myself during those four and one half years. I have good ego strength, or I wouldn't have survived. I kept being amazed at what I could do to survive."

Both Karen and Jane were white middle class professional women who had been successful in their own field of work. Karen had been in another relationship where she had battered her partner, but the violence in that earlier relationship did not ever reach the proportions that it reached with Jane. While Karen grew up in a family that used violence, and where she herself was abused, Jane grew up in a family where voices were never raised in anger, much less where acts of anger and violence were known. The account of this battering relationship bears a strong resemblance to accounts from battered wives, and from other lesbians who describe their own experiences in receiving violence from a female lover. Martin (in Coming Up! Breaking the Silence: Coming Out as Battered Lesbians, Feb. ?) wrote of the similarities in the struggles of abusive lesbian relationships with those found in wifebattering relationships: "the profound isolation, lowered self-esteem, emotional and economic dependence, fear of being alone, nowhere to go." Added to this list of commonalities are the shame, the embarrassment, and the belief that, "I somehow am contributing to this." Zeiger, in her Washington Blade article (1981) cited her experience as a counselor to lesbians in abusive relationships with other women as her source for the observation that lesbians tend to leave such relationships a lot sooner than do women who are in abusive relationships with men. She believed the reason for this was the support that lesbians

received from other women. In her discussion of lesbian battering, Schulman (Gay Community News: 7/84) noted several differences about lesbian battering. Most striking was the observation that a battered woman in one relationship can become the batterer in the next one. This observation is supported by several of the personal accounts of lesbian violence, where the women being battered by their lovers sometimes cite that they began returning the violence even within the same relationship. The other difference Schulman (1984) identified is that within the battering dyad of the heterosexual couple it is the battered woman who seeks counseling, but among lesbians, it is more likely to be the batterer to seek counseling.

Without systematic studies, clear differences and similarities for battering within heterosexual and same sex couples will not emerge. One difference that is clear is that shelters and other resources have proliferated to aid the battered woman who is in an abusive relationship with a man. Few resources exist for lesbians who need help.Lesbians who have tried to seek assistance from the resources designed for women in more traditional relationships that are abusive have not been welcomed, as a general rule.

Lesbian Battering: The Fit with Existing Theory

Early in this chapter I reviewed the major broad theories that have guided our understanding of violence within intimate couple relationships. Greines and Gordon (1983) in their germinal review of family violence criticized most existing scholarship on family violence as having "a weak understanding of family, of gender, and of power." (p. 492) They continued their discussion by elaborating three factors relevant to an analysis and critique of family violence:

1. All violence must be considered within the context of wider power relations;
2. All types of family violence have both gender and generational foundations that must be considered; and
3. The complexities and subtleties of family violence are not always quantifiable, so understanding will require qualitative and theoretical research, rather than only empirical research.(1983:492)

This literature has emerged from studies of violence from the perspective of the traditional family. It is easy to see why it is so important to insist that gender issues be considered pivotal in studies of violence within traditional families; power distribution in traditional families is ordered along gender lines. While emerging empirical evidence supports that lesbian relationships do not always succeed in having power distributed equally between both partners, it is not clear how gender could be an issue in power differentiation in lesbian couples. Gender, identity, and gender role,, as well as the function of power, will need to be considered in trying to understand how existing theory can apply to lesbian battering. Pagelow (1981) called our attention to two factors relevant for couple violence: investment in the relationship and commitment to a traditional relationship. At first consideration, it seems incongruous that lesbians who have established a relationship that is outside society's traditions could have a commitment to traditional values within a relationship. Yet, clearly some do; there is a large body of lesbian literature describing such relationships. This provides another factor for consideration. Last, Walker talked about learned helplessness as a major factor in couple violence (1978, 1979); how lesbians perceive their power base within a relationship needs consideration for its relevance to couple violence in lesbian relationships.

A liberal understanding of gender would move beyond biological sex differentiation and would include both social roles (tasks, status and activities) that others ascribe to women, and to those internalized features of identity individual women hold of themselves. This internalized identity for an individual woman might well include some features of socially assigned gender

activities and statuses that are often associated with men, or that cannot be neatly listed under one gender identity or another. This argument is dependent upon a fairly abstract notion of gender.

It seems clear that one does not need actual men and women in a situation for that situation to involve gender differences as relevant factors. Rather than considering violence within the dyad of a lesbian couple, we might think of other female dyads--mother- daughter violence, or sister- sister violence. How does gender become an instrumental force within those dyads involving family violence? While gender may be invoked through the values of roles that have been internalized, gender may also be involved in the abstract formulation of the ideal family, both in terms of family structure and family function. Regardless of whether activities can be linked with gender, it is likely that patterns of activities and status are linked with degree of power and with certain types of situations. For example, when a child breaks a major rule, or breaks the same rule repetitively, the powerful parent may spank the child. Rule breaking may become associated with the response by authority of spanking--whether the rule was reasonable or not.

In other words, we still carry with us the understanding of family dynamics sanctioned by society that we learned growing up: traditionally structured families with gender differentiated power assignment as one of the family features. Gender, then, would affect lesbian coupled relationships in at least two possible ways: first, through our internalization of values associated with power status and activities; and secondly, through our acceptance of family dynamics, derived from traditional families.

The role of gender in family violence is unclear and is difficult to apply to lesbian battering, except in the very abstract ways that do not greatly aid our understanding. Gender does not emerge as a factor in lesbian relationships through role playing. Recent studies (SCWU and Peplau, et al, 1978) have not found "role playing" to be common among lesbians: lesbians are unlikely to consider themselves "butch" or "femme" and therefore do not divide household tasks, or allocate power within the couple relationship according to these assumed gender role enactments. The role of gender in lesbian violence is likely to be more subtle than is found within heterosexual violence. Common to women in both lesbian and heterosexual relationships is that we grew up in traditional families where the society norm postulates more power to men. As women growing up in these families we learned that family disagreements resulted in arguments, punishment and retaliation. These responses were likely to include verbal abuse and some degree of violence (slapping, spanking, pushing) and all these responses were sanctioned within the family. We learned early and repetitively that prized activities and statuses were often accorded men in the family, and that men's physical display of power was applauded. We also learned that certain dimensions of family life were very private, and loyalty to the family demanded not discussing certain events and issues outside the family.

While this common base makes it easy to see how the stage is set for women to internalize the values inherent in traditional families, it does not explain the complexities of how values are internalized and how the selection of values is made by individuals. Gilligan (198) has demonstrated that women hold different moral values about what is right and wrong from men and because of this, they solve ethical problems differently from men. The internalized values and behaviors that lesbians learned from their own families that both conflict management involving violence and power distribution were gender based, yet these values may conflict with other values they hold as women. We need more information on women's values and how they resolve conflict.

While theory of wife battering considered unequal power distribution as it was associated with gender, it may be that unequal power distribution has the key role in couple violence, regardless of the origin of the power imbalance. More often than any other type of couple,

lesbians value and achieve power balance within their couple relationships. No data are available to know if those relationships with an imbalance of power are more likely to have violence as one of the relationship features. Lesbians who do not achieve a balance of power in their relationships were less satisfied with the relationships than were those whose relationships were characterized by equal power distribution (Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton, 1982). Greater resources (education and financial income) and less investment in the relationship were associated with the person having greater power in relationships where power was distributed unevenly. The distribution of power as it is associated with violence within lesbian relationships needs to be studied, along with identifying further factors associated with power differentiation. Relationship among variables in the SCWU survey, such as education, income source, income level, age, investments, attachment preference and status, etc. could be correlated with violence in relationship in order to begin to understand the role of power distribution and violence between lesbians.

Traditionally, ideology was associated with valuing the family that is structured so that the man is in charge and the rest of the family is subordinate. Pagelow's (1981) model also called for acceptance of the use of violence in the conjugal relationship by the man and commitment to the relationship by the woman. Caldwell and Peplau (1984) found that most lesbian couples desired relationships where both women hold equal power. This is aligned more with feminist values than it is with traditional ideology. It is difficult to see how traditional ideology, as narrowly defined by Pagelow, has a role in lesbian violence. Lesbians will vary in the commitment to feminist values, and some will be much closer to traditional values than they are to feminist values. These traditional values will need to be defined much more broadly than simply power allocation by gender within a family. So far, the histories of lesbian violence have portrayed women who seem committed to feminism, and to equal power distribution within relationships. Pagelow (1981) also postulated that once battering had begun, it will escalate; women are more likely to stay in these relationships if they have few resources available to them and if they are strongly committed to traditional ideology and display this through valuing marriage. In the SCWU survey, 52 women said they were in a continuing relationship where there had been a history of violence. Forty seven of those 52 women reported that violence had either stopped or decreased! Clearly, we need to understand more about those forces that contributed to stopping violence once it had begun.

If traditional ideology is interpreted as valuing the coupled relationship and if it carries with it a strong sense of loyalty to the relationship, and therefore the partner within it, then lesbians may well be vulnerable to traditional values, when characterized in this light. This would allow a translation of family structure and dynamics to the lesbian situation. If this were so, then lesbians who value coupleness as the ideal relationship for lesbians, and who demonstrated loyalty to the relationship itself and to the individual would be vulnerable to staying in a battering relationship once it began, as are heterosexual women. Yet, this did not happen, as the survey data clearly demonstrate. Further analysis of the survey data is needed if we are to understand those forces that are correlated with stopping or diminishing the flow of violence in lesbian relationships.

Learned helplessness was applied to wife battering by Walker (1978. 1979). This theory tells us that belief about control is more important than actual control. Specifically, even when a person has control over their own response and over the outcome it produces, but believes that control does not and cannot exist, the person is responding within a learned helplessness model. Many factors can be perceived as constraints on power: shame and embarrassment, belief that the violence was actually triggered by you, lack of tangible resources, fear of retaliation from others, belief that the violence was deserved. This theory transposes most easily to the lesbian situation without strain. It is based in behavioral psychology and includes the possibility of patterns that can be learned in adulthood within situations that have the relevant factors. What the relevant

factors are in lesbian relationships that interact to promote and sustain violence would need further study.

While learned helplessness seems as applicable to lesbian couple violence as it does to heterosexual couple violence, other theories and concepts do not seem to fit as well. Perhaps the most critical concept to warrant further thought and study is gender as it relates to couple violence. Clearly the society base is patriarchal. Clearly men and women have learned that men are accorded higher status and greater power than women. These values are internalized and activities become associated with both power and gender. Violence is sanctioned as a way to manage conflict and differences in many situations, and aggressive behaviors are linked with manliness, and therefore gender. How these variables that are so crucial to the dynamics of maintaining power distribution within heterosexual couples are enacted in lesbian couples needs further understanding. Until the role of gender as it relates to lesbian violence is fully understood, the role of gender as it relates to violence in other types of couple relationships cannot be considered totally valid.

While further understanding is needed through empirical research, other methods are needed in exploring lesbian violence. More accounts must be told and written by lesbians who receive and who use violence in relationships. Theorists must grapple with their basic tenets, and identify how broadly their ideas can be applied. Those who studied violence within couples totally ignored gay and lesbian couples for their samples. Researchers who studied gay and lesbian couples (Mendola, 1980; Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Peplau, 1983; Caldwell and Peplau 1984 and McWhirter and Mattison, 1984) did not address how gay men or lesbians managed conflict within their relationships. None seemed to have considered the possibility that violence might occur in these relationships.

Knowledge about violence in intimate relationships is important and can contribute to better understanding human behavior. Also, being in a relationship where women hurt each other and feel trapped involves an enormous human cost. So many lesbians are closeted, and cannot use the available community resources for the assistance they need for fear of exposure. Even if the lesbian is openly identified as a lesbian, the reception she would receive at a women's shelter is unpredictable. More knowledge about lesbian violence is needed so that assistance can be planned and implemented.

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Fear of Discrimination

Judith D. Tupac and Judith M. Saunders

> "I am afraid; I am afraid!" I cried.
> "And I too am afraid; but it is better to suffer more and to escape than to suffer less and to remain."
>
> Margaret Oliphant
> A Little Pilgrim

Being afraid of discrimination does not mean that the fearful person will actually experience discrimination any more than not being afraid provides her with immunity from discrimination. Fear is its own reality.

Several items on the questionnaire addressed fear of discrimination, and we operationalized the definition of "afraid of discrimination" from these items:

32d	Being afraid of being evicted or denied housing.
33d,e	Fearful of lesbian identity being discovered at work and being looked down on or being discriminated against
34g,h	Fearful of trouble at work
351-g	Fearful of denial of services:banking,investments, insurance, accounting or tax, legal, travel or hotel accommodations
36i	Fearful of being refused medical help or health care
37i,j	Fearful of other difficulties with medical help
38h	Fearful of trouble with education
39h	Being afraid of being in trouble with person(s) who raised you
40a-c.	For non-citizens, fearful of immigration, naturalization or re-entry problems
44b.a.	While employed as a federal employee, fearful of exposure during purges.

Afraid of discrimination was categorized into degrees of fear according to the number of items from the list above that each respondent checked:

Degree of Fear	Scoring
No fear	None of the items were checked
Low fear	One item was checked
Moderate fear	Two items were checked
High fear	Three or more items were checked

Using this operational definition of fear of discrimination and scoring method, sixteen percent of the women had high levels of fear, twelve percent were moderately fearful, twenty-one percent were low in fear, while fifty-one percent were not fearful of discrimination at all.

How does degree of fear of discrimination correlate with other responses in this survey? Are there any patterns that begin to differentiate women with high fear from those with low or no fear of discrimination? We used the operational definition of fear of discrimination as the basis for a cross-tabulation for all the variables on the questionnaire. Row by column contingencies were run for each item, based on this definition of fear of discrimination, with alpha set at .05.

Those findings that were significant will be reported briefly in this section. After examining the data for general relationships among questionnaire items and fear of discrimination, we

looked more specifically at how fear of discrimination was related to other definitions of variables in this study: type of therapy, degree of stress, sexual problems, degree of outness and type of stress.

Level of education was related to fear of discrimination (p=0.0009). Generally, the data indicated that fear of discrimination was positively correlated with fear of discrimination--i.e. fear was greater as educational level was higher, but this impression was not tested statistically.

Neither occupational group nor work status showed a significant relationship to fear of discrimination, but one income source--family as source of income--was significantly related (p=0.010).

The only category among political activities significantly related to fear was "giving time and energy to political causes (p=0.0346). Further testing might reveal if fear could act as a motivator for involvement in political activities.

Fear was significantly related to concern about developing depression (p=0.0000), suicide (p=0.0001), anger beyond control (p=0.0153), anxiety (p=0.0000), eating to excess (p=0.0083) and loss of reality (p=0002). Smoking to excess, drinking to excess and drug dependency were not significantly related to fear, and these omissions may give some support to the argument that these substances are used to self-medicate against anxiety and fear.

Significant relationships were found for a variety of help-seeking behaviors: seeking help from a counselor or therapist for a life crisis (p=0.0033), consulting a psychologist (p=0.0013), seeking help from a therapist more than one period in your life (p=0.0291); and the type of therapy sought--individual (p=0.0061), couple (p=0.0011), group (p=0.0078), and other (p=0157).

Several types of problems that women sought help for were significantly related to fear of discrimination: personal (p=0.0082), relationship (p=0.0000), relationship break-ups (p=0.0000) and family (p=0.0019). No significant relationship was found for problems with alcohol or drugs or for sexual problems.

One symptom of menopause, depression, was related at a p=0.0031 level of significance. Depression was also reported earlier as a significantly related problem that women reported concern about having or developing.

It is not surprising that fear of discrimination exists among women who believed they could not tell their physician about being gay because their subsequent care would reflect disapproval (p=0.0000). Similarly, choosing a lesbian physician was significant at a p=0.0001 level.

Only one category of sexual problem was related to fear, and that was "I'm interested and become aroused, but get too uptight to really having sex the way I would like to." (p=0.00-26)

Women reported about their menstrual periods, and three categories of their responses were significant: usually regular (p=0.0020), painful as an adolescent and still painful (p=0.0081), and I have reached menopause (p=0.0157).

Women responded to eight types of gay activities that they participated in, and two of these were significantly related to fear of discrimination: attending concerts or performances by gay entertainers (p=0.0161) and attending gay fundraisers (p=0.0047). General impressions from the data are that greater frequency of attendance is associated with greater fear levels and seldom attending is associated with lower fear.

Membership in some types of organizations was related to fear; lesbian educational (p=0.0184), lesbian political (p=0.0112), feminist (p=0.0255), gay or lesbian caucus in heterosexual organization (p=0.0055), and educational cosexual gay organization (p= 0.0417).

Seeking help from traditional versus nontraditional therapists was significantly related to the degree of fear of discrimination reported (p=0.0188). It appears that the significance was

attributed to higher fear levels among those who sought help from non-traditional sources.

Degree of stress and degree of fear were related ($p=0.0000$). It looks as thought this relationship was a positive correlation: the higher the stress level the greater the fear level.

Sexual problems and degree of fear were related ($p=0.0142$), and this relationship also seemed positive: the more extensive the sexual problems, the greater the fear level.

Degree of outness and degree of fear were related at the $p=0.0453$ level of significance. While the low outness group reported high fear levels, and the high outness group reported low fear levels, we did not test these relationships statistically to determine just how outness and fear were related. When types of stress were examined, substance difficulties ($p=0.0383$) and depression ($p=0.0000$) were related.

APPENDIX

13719 Ventura Blvd., Suite D
Sherman Oaks, California 91423
784-9160

INTRODUCTION

Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) has grown into a strong organization of lesbians representing a wide range of backgrounds and interests. Through our educational, research, and social programs, we work toward UNDERSTANDING.

In our struggle against stereotyping, we realize the necessity for **accurate** information about lesbians — information that only lesbians can provide. In the Fall of 1977, we sent "Personal Profile" questionnaires to our own members. The high response rate showed their appreciation for the importance of this information.

The questionnaire you are now holding is even more critical. It has been developed by SCWU to be distributed to all lesbians throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Now is YOUR chance to tell about YOUR life as only YOU know it — not as somebody else thinks it is or ought to be. There is no space for your name and address, so you can respond with the knowledge that confidentiality is assured.

Since this questionnaire is devised by and for lesbians, we expect to have a publishable study to use as a tool in our struggle for rights and recognition.

Throughout this questionnaire, we have used the words "lesbian" "gay" and "homosexual" as they seemed to fit naturally into the context of the material. We are acutely aware that for some these terms carry heavy and even offensive implications. But what words should we used instead? Since we are unable (ourselves) to think of useful substitutes, we thank you for your understanding and cooperation, and ask first that you indicate YOUR preference below.

Please tell us how YOU refer to yourself with regard to your sexual or affectional preference/orientation. Please check only one.

n=960

4.0	a.	Homosexual
50.0	b.	Lesbian
6.7	c.	Bisexual
35.6	d.	Gay
3.7	e.	Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Now, go ahead and enjoy yourself for 30 minutes filling out the rest of the questionnaire. If you have already filled one out, pass it along to a friend. If you want more copies, write or telephone SCWU.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN SCWU BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

n=935

- ☐ I am a member of SCWU. 36.5
- ☐ I am not a member of SCWU. 63.5

BACKGROUND AND LIFESTYLE

CARD 1

1. _____ How old are you? /8-9

n=990
white = 91.4
other = 8.6

2. What is your race/ethnicity? n = 990 /10

2.9 a. Black
91.4 b. White
2.9 c. Latin/Hispanic
.2 d. Asian American
.2 e. American Indian
2.3 f. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

3. Please check one religious affiliation that applies in the column for Background and one in the column for Current Practice. /11-12

BACKGROUND	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	CURRENT PRACTICE
29.7	a. Catholic	6.0
45.9	b. Protestant	14.2
11.2	c. Jewish	7.1
.3	d. Feminist Religion/WICCA	3.5
7.0	e. Other	20.5
5.9	f. No religion	48.6

n=976 n=878

4. Please check the highest level of education attained. /13

DEFINED
A+B = H.S. & BELOW
C = A.A.
D = B.A./B.S.
E+F = GRAD.

1.0 a. Grade School
22.4 b. High School
17.6 c. A.A.
29.9 d. B.A. or B.S.
21.8 e. Masters
7.2 f. Doctorate

n = 980

5. Many important educational experiences occur outside of the formal educational institutions listed above. Please check those you have had. /14-17

n=935

51.9 a. On-the-job training leading to special qualifications
36.3 b. Specialized training which led to a certificate or diploma
12.2 c. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
18.9 d. None of the above

6. Please indicate your employment status. Check all that apply. /18-25

n=935

63.8 a. Work full time, employed by other
10.3 b. Work part time, employed by other
11.6 c. Work full time, self employed
12.9 d. Work part time, self employed
8.5 e. Work more than one job
3.7 f. Unemployed
2.2 g. Retired
8.1 h. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

7. Please indicate your occupational group. Check only one. /26

n=984

5.1 a. Laborer
7.9 b. Clerical
12.5 c. Managerial
4.0 d. Governmental
12.0 e. Educational
42.0 f. Professional
5.4 g. Student
4.2 h. Creative
7.0 i. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

8. Do you currently work in the field you checked above? /27

n=979

91.6 YES
8.4 NO

9. Check all sources of income that apply to you. /28-37

9.2 a. Income from work (salary, commission, etc.)
1.2 b. Welfare
2.0 c. Unemployment compensation
2.7 d. Disability
27.0 e. Investments
5.1 f. Independent wealth (from inheritance, trust funds, etc.)
5.5 g. Family
.9 h. Alimony
5.2 i. Child support
9.2 j. Other _____
(PLEASE SPECIFY)

10. Please check your total annual income level from ALL SOURCES. n = 984 /38

4.9 a. Less than $5,000
13.7 b. $5,000 -$10,000
18.0 c. $10,000-$15,000
19.5 d. $15,000-$20,000
18.3 e. $20,000-$25,000
12.1 f. $25,000-$30,000
8.0 g. $30,000-$40,000
6.5 h. Over $40,000

11. Please check all of the following statements that apply. /39-43

Have you ever lived with or married a man?

41.2 a. Yes, a straight man
6.4 b. Yes, a gay man
5.7 c. Yes, a gay man and I knew he was gay ahead of time
5.5 d. Yes, a gay man and he knew he was gay ahead of time
51.1 e. No

If YES, were the relationship(s) /44-49

9.0 a. For convenience
3.7 b. To hid my gayness from others
6.3 c. To hide my gayness from myself
21.7 d. Because I loved him
16.7 e. Because it was expected
8.7 f. Other _____
(PLEASE SPECIFY)

12. Do you have any brothers or sisters who married someone gay without knowing this beforehand? n = 981 /50

1.2 YES
98.8 NO

13. Please indicate your current attachment status. Check all that apply. /51-57

37.3 a. Single
1.0 b. Widowed
12.1 c. Divorced
3.3 d. Separated
34.3 e. Lesbian marriage Length _____
36.7 f. "Couple" relationship, not defined as marriage Length _____
1.3 g. Heterosexual marriage Length _____

14. When you were growing up, were you n = 980 /58

4.7 a. Very femine
31.3 b. Average
64 c. A tomboy

15. Which hand do you use? Check the one most applicable to you. n = 989 /59

5.7 a. Left hand
67.0 b. Right hand
3.7 c. Left hand, but use the right hand sometimes
21.6 d. Right hand, but use the left hand sometimes
1.9 e. I use either hand equally well

DEFINED A + C = 1.9 = LEFT
B + D = 88.7 = RIGHT
E = 1.9 = EQUAL

16. With whom do you usually spend Thanksgiving? Check only one. n=983 /60

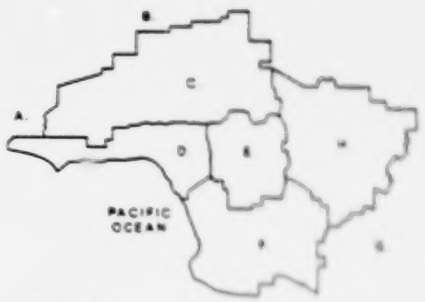
15.9 a. Friends
21.2 b. Family
19.9 c. Both friends and family
1.1 d. Alone
21.4 e. It varies from year to year
20.5 f. With my lover

17. Please check the appropriate column for your current residence. Do not include income property. /61-62

RENT	HOUSING TYPE	OWN
53.3	a. Apartment	2.5
3.6	b. Condominium, Coop, or Townhouse	11.2
37.6	c. House	78.3
.5	d. Mobile Home	5.4
5.0	e. Other	2.7
n=561		n=447

18. Please check the section of metropolitan Los Angeles where you currently live. These sections are the same as used in the telephone directories. n=924 /63

3.1 a. Ventura
1.2 b. Newhall
16.5 c. Northwestern
14.6 d. Western
16.6 e. Los Angeles
12.8 f. Southern
12.4 g. Orange
9.6 h. Northeastern
13.2 i. Not in the L.A. area



What city or town do you live in? _____

19. Please indicate which person most closely reflects who raised you. n=978 /64

62.7 a. Mother and father
27.1 b. Mother only
1.9 c. Father only
6.5 d. Other family member(s)
1.7 e. Other non-family

20. Please give your age at times when there was a death, divorce or separation. Check not more than one disruption for each family member. /65-79

	YOUR AGE	TYPE OF DISRUPTION (a.) SEPARATION	(b.) DIVORCE	(c.) DEATH	n=
a. Mother		19.7	34.0	46.3	406
b. Father		13.3	28.2	58.4	457
c. Other family Member		7.5	10.6	81.9	414
d. Non-family		16.7	13.7	69.5	174
e. Not applicable					

21. Please indicate your satisfaction with your work/job. Check only one. n=977 /80

66.4 a. I like both my work and where I work
13.0 b. I like my work, but not where I work
5.6 c. I like where I work, but not my work
8.7 d. I don't like either one
6.2 e. I don't work

DEFINITION
A. 66.4 (HIGH)
B+C 18.6 (MODERATE)
D. 8.7 (DISSATISFIED)
E. 6.2 (DON'T WORK)

SCWU 10/88

22. Please complete the following table if you have children (either adopted or natural). Do not complete this table for your mate's children who might be living with you. CARD 2 /6-61

	SEX OF CHILD		AGE	LIVES WITH YOU		LIVES WITH FATHER	KNOWS YOU'RE A LESBIAN	BELIEVE CHILD IS GAY
	MALE	FEMALE		YES	NO			
n=196	53.1	46.9		46.4	53.6	19.9	76.5	23.0
n=123	46.3	53.7		36.4	63.6	23.6	77.2	19.5
n=53	35.8	64.2		58.0	42.0	22.6	79.2	17.3

23. Please indicate the number of brothers and sisters you have. /63-70

		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
.424	Number of older sisters	69.1	22.6	5.8	1.7	.5	.2	—	—
mean .584	Number of younger sisters	62.0	24.3	9.0	3.3	.7	.4	.2	—
.546	Number of older brothers	62.6	26.4	7.0	2.4	.9	.4	.2	—
.629	Number of younger brothers	60.8	24.7	9.7	3.0	.8	.5	.2	.1

24. Please check the category which best indicates your political orientation. n=975 /71

.1	a. Far right	28.3	e. Liberal
7.0	b. Conservative	6.7	f. Far Left
8.2	c. Republican	13.2	g. Independent
28.0	d. Democrat	8.5	h. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

25. Indicate whether you are generally FOR or AGAINST the following. /72-77

	n=	(a.) FOR	(b.) AGAINST
a. Capital Punishment	949	50.1	49.9
b. Abortion	965	91.5	8.5
c. Equal Rights Amendment	983	99.3	.7
d. National Health Insurance	929	78.5	21.5
e. Gay Rights	985	99.7	.3
f. Nuclear Energy	926	26.0	74.0

CARD 3

26. Please indicate your degree of political activity by checking the appropriate column for each activity. /6-14

	n=	NEVER 1	SELDOM 2	SOMETIMES 3	FREQUENTLY 4	ALWAYS 5
a. Vote in elections	987	4.9	4.2	7.3	21.1	62.6
b. Give money to causes	971	9.6	18.0	41.5	24.1	6.8
c. Give money to candidates	972	54.2	24.3	15.0	4.1	2.4
d. Give money to political parties	961	64.8	19.4	11.1	2.6	2.1
e. Give time and energy to causes	965	18.1	22.7	33.4	19.3	6.5
f. Give time and energy to candidates	958	55.1	27.2	14.8	1.5	1.4
g. Give time and energy to political parties	961	68.0	21.2	8.0	1.8	1.0
h. Write to a politician	968	36.8	26.9	27.9	6.9	1.5
i. Write to a newspaper	966	54.1	27.0	14.9	2.9	1.0

27. We are interested in the types and diversity of business investments lesbians have. Please indicate your ownership in each investment possibility listed. /15-24

	n=	DO NOT OWN 1	OWN INDIVIDUALLY 2	OWN IN PARTNERSHIP 3
a. Stocks, bonds, liquid asset account	866	59.7	33.4	6.9
b. Savings account, regular	937	10.9	75.0	14.1
c. Savings account, certificate	804	72.0	21.0	7.0
d. Second Trust Deeds	754	85.7	8.2	6.1
e. Income property, House/Apartment	903	66.9	15.1	18.1
f. Income property, Office/Commercial Building	736	95.8	2.0	2.2
g. Gold or silver	783	67.4	30.1	2.4
h. Insurance	852	33.6	60.7	5.8
i. Raw land	759	83.9	9.4	6.7
j. Other (Please Specify)	309	73.8	13.9	12.3

28. Please rate your current degree of indebtedness. Check only one. n=942 /25

50.7 a. Low/manageable
32.5 b. Moderate/manageable
13.2 c. High/manageable
3.0 d. Beginning to have trouble handling debts
.6 e. Considering filing bankruptcy or obtaining expert assistance in managing my debts.
____ f. Other _____
(PLEASE SPECIFY)

29. How much do you travel for business? n=985 /26

5.7 a. A great deal
13.2 b. A moderate amount
31.0 c. A small amount
50.2 d. None

Approximately how many business trips do you take each year? mean = 1.839 /27-28

How much do you travel for pleasure? n=985 /29

12.4 a. A great deal
42.6 b. A moderate amount
41.8 c. A small amount
3.1 d. None

Approximately how many pleasure trips do you take each year? mean = 3.549 /30-31

30. Please indicate how you prefer to use your leisure time. /32-50

	n=	LIKE A LOT 1.	LIKE SOME 2.	DON'T LIKE 3.
a. Stay at home	985	53.5	44.0	2.5
b. Work around house	984	32.7	50.2	17.1
c. Work around yard	953	38.1	39.0	22.9
d. Read	989	67.3	29.4	3.2
e. Watch television	984	16.3	62.5	21.2
f. Craftwork, needlework	974	17.7	33.1	49.3
g. Visit with friends	989	73.6	25.8	.6
h. Go to restaurants for dinner	988	66.6	31.7	1.7
i. Gay bars	979	16.3	56.3	27.4
j. Other bars/clubs	973	4.4	28.8	66.8
k. Volunteer activity for organizations	977	20.0	52.0	28.0
l. Live concerts/plays	987	68.8	28.8	2.4
m. Movies	987	54.6	41.8	3.5
n. Club activities/discussions	979	35.8	48.3	15.9
o. Spectator sports	981	23.8	43.6	32.6
p. Participate in individual sports	986	37.9	40.5	21.6
q. Participate in team sports	978	26.9	37.0	36.1
r. Camp	975	49.2	29.7	21.0
s. Other	282	87.6	7.1	5.3

52

SCWH 10/88

* = USED TO DETERMINE "DISCRIMINATION" LEVELS
X = " " " "FEAR OF DISCRIMINATION" LEVELS

DISCRIMINATION

31. Where you are now living, does anyone know you are gay? Check only one. n=982 /51

51.8 a. Yes, but it is okay
* 2.1 b. Yes, and I am having trouble
30.2 c. I don't know
13.8 d. No
X 1.9 e. No, but I am afraid someone will find out

32. Have you ever been denied housing or evicted because you are a lesbian? n=986 /52

* 4.9 a. Yes
* .9 b. Yes, I was turned out of my parents home
87.3 c. No
X 6.9 d. No, but I am afraid it might happen someday

33. Where you are working, is it generally known that you are a lesbian? n=947 /53

33.6 a. Yes, and it is not a problem
1.4 b. Yes, and it is a problem
48.6 c. No
X 6.5 d. No, but I am afraid of being discovered and looked down upon
X 9.9 e. No, but I am afraid of being discovered and discriminated against

34. Did you ever have trouble on any job because you are a lesbian? Check all that apply. /54-61

* 2.4 a. Yes, and I was denied employment
* 2.8 b. Yes, and I was denied promotions and/or pay raises
* 1.0 c. Yes, and I was denied or had revoked my security clearance
* 1.8 d. Yes, and I was blackmailed
* 11.5 e. Yes, other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
59.7 f. No
X 12.7 g. No, but I have been afraid of being discovered and looked down upon
X 17.7 h. No, but I have been afraid of being discovered and discriminated against

35. Have you ever been denied any of these services or facilities because you are a lesbian? /62-68

	n=	* YES	NO	X FEARFUL
a. Banking and loans	966	.9	95.4	3.6
b. Investments	962	.2	97.9	1.9
c. Insurance	968	1.3	96.1	2.6
d. Accounting and tax services	963	.4	98.2	1.3
e. Legal services	963	.8	97.0	2.2
f. Travel services	966	.5	97.6	1.9
g. Accommodations (eg. hotels)	963	3.7	90.6	5.7

36. In trying to get medical help or health care, have you ever been REFUSED because you were a lesbian? Check all that apply. /69-77

* 0 a. Yes, seeking treatment for venereal disease
* .6 b. Yes, seeking treatment for emotional problems
* .4 c. Yes, seeking treatment specific to women's health problems
* .3 d. Yes, seeking treatment for general physical problems
* 2.9 e. Yes, when my lover was treated I was refused admission or information
1.7 f. Yes, when I was treated, my lover was refused admission or information
* .3 g. Yes, other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
86.5 h. No
X 8.4 i. No, but I am fearful of having difficulty

37. Aside from being refused when trying to get medical help or health care, have you ever had difficulties because you were a lesbian? Check all that apply. CARD 4 /6-15

*	.2	a. Yes, seeking treatment for venereal disease
*	5.1	b. Yes, seeking treatment for emotional problems
*	2.2	c. Yes, seeking treatment specific to women's health problems
*	.6	d. Yes, seeking treatment for general physical problems
*	3.3	e. Yes, when my lover was treated or hospitalized
	2.0	f. Yes, when I was treated or hospitalized, my lover had trouble
*	1.9	g. Yes, other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
	77.4	h. No
X	9.0	i. No, but I am fearful of having difficulty
X	1.8	j. I have avoided seeking health care for fear of having difficulty

38. Were you ever "in trouble" at any educational level because you were a lesbian? Check all that apply. /16-23

*	1.2	a. Yes, but I was shown understanding by most
*	3.9	b. Yes, but I was lectured or intimidated
*	3.6	c. Yes, and I was suspended or threatened with being kicked out
*	2.8	d. Yes, and I was referred for treatment or counseling
*	1.0	e. Yes, and I was denied access to a class or a school
*	3.0	f. Yes, other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
	78.5	g. No
X	9.2	h. No, but I was afraid of being in trouble or denied access

39. Were you ever "in trouble" with anyone who raised you for being a lesbian? Check all that apply. /24-31

*	9.6	a. Yes, and I was eventually shown understanding
*	6.7	b. Yes, and I was lectured or denied privileges
*	2.3	c. Yes, and I was severely punished
*	4.0	d. Yes, and I was sent for counseling or treatment
*	2.6	e. Yes, and I was thrown out
*	10.6	f. Yes, other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
	58.6	g. No
X	13.1	h. No, but I was afraid

40. If you are NOT a native born U.S. citizen, have you ever experienced any of the following because you're a lesbian? /32-35

	n=	* YES	NO	X FEARFUL
* a. Been refused naturalization	41.0	2.4	95.1	2.4
* b. Been denied immigration	40.0	2.5	97.5	0
* c. Been denied emigration/re-entry	37.0	2.7	97.3	0
d. Not applicable				

41. In your fight for custody of your children, was lesbianism an issue? Check only one. n = 666 /36

2.0	a. Yes, and I won	4.1	d. No, but I was afraid it would come out
1.1	b. Yes, and I lost	3.9	e. No, but it is still a possibility
10.4	c. No	78.7	f. Not applicable

42. Have you ever been in the U.S. military? Check all that apply. n = 969 /37

12.8 YES 87.2 NO

If YES, which? n = 126

		n = 94		n = 120		
40.5	a. Army	69.1	a. Active duty	71.7	a. Honorable discharge	/38-41
23.8	b. Navy		b. Reserves/guard	19.2	b. General discharge	
26.2	c. Air Force		n = 91	1.7	c. Dishonorable discharge	
8.7	d. Marines	73.6	a. Enlisted		d. Medical discharge	
.8	e. Coast Guard	26.4	b. Officer	7.5	e. Not yet discharged	

SCWU 10/88

43. If you received a less than honorable discharge (related to being a lesbian), did you apply to have it upgraded? /42

* 1.0 a. Yes, and it was upgraded
* .8 b. Yes, and it was refused
* .2 c. Yes, and it is still in process
* 2.8 d. No, I did not apply
95.2 e. Not applicable

n=502

44. During your military service or work at any other federal agency, were you aware of any homosexual purges at your facility? Check only one. /43

n=559

* 6.1 a. Yes, and I was among those questioned
× 4.3 b. Yes, and I was fearful of exposure
* 1.8 c. Yes, and I was exposed
11.1 d. No
5.9 e. No, but I heard about other places or a former purge at the place I was in
70.8 f. Not applicable

45. If you were questioned and/or exposed, /44-55

	n=	YES	NO
a. Were you confined for a period of time	52	32.7	67.3
b. Were you denied access to civilian counsel	46	28.3	71.7
c. Were you asked to testify against other lesbians	54	57.4	42.6
d. Were formal charges made against you	54	40.7	59.3
e. Were you interrogated with scare tactics/threats	53	73.6	26.4
f. Were you released "clean" after questioning	50	46	54
g. Were you denounced by another lesbian and felt you had to confess	48	8.3	91.7
h. Was there any real evidence against you	53	22.6	77.4
i. Were you coerced into testifying against someone	50	14	86
j. Did you confess just to put an end to the nightmare	51	25.5	74.5
k. Were you released "clean" after a long period	43	27.9	72.1
l. Not applicable	415	—	—

23.9 ANGER
31.2 ANXIETY
12.8 REALITY

STRESS / HEALTH

TYPE OF (DEFINED): #47
69.1 SUBSTANCE EXCESS
53.1 DEPRESSION/SUICIDE

46. In an emotional crisis, where would you first turn for help or advice? Check only one. n=980 /56

50.8 a. My lover
19.0 b. My friend
1.7 c. My family
8.8 d. Professional counselors
15.1 e. I would try to take care of it alone
.7 f. Straight friends or colleagues
3.9 g. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

47. Have you ever been concerned about having or developing any of the following difficulties? Check all that apply. /57-65

34.3 a. Smoking to excess
35.2 b. Drinking to excess
11.5 c. Drug dependency
49.2 d. Depression
28.6 e. Suicidal feelings
23.9 f. Anger beyond control
31.2 g. Unreasonable fears or extreme anxiety
34.6 h. Eating to excess
12.8 i. Loss of contact with reality

DEG. OF STRESS DEFINED
LOW 55.6
MOD. 26.3
HIGH 18.1

48. Have you ever sought help from a counselor or therapist when faced with a life crisis, such as the break up of a relationship, death of someone close to you, relationship problems, or personal problems or difficulties? /66

74.4 YES 25.6 NO n=990

49. If YES, did you consult a /67-73

20.9 a. Counselor
19.7 b. Psychiatrist
.7 c. Nurse
38.4 d. Psychologist
13.1 e. Social Worker
8.5 f. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
10.2 g. Not applicable

DEFINED #49
TRADITIONAL B+D = 49.6
NON-TRAD. A/C/E/F = 24.9
OTHER/NA = 25.4

50. Was the therapist /74-75

77.8 a. Female n = 731
22.2 b. Male

57.8 a. Straight n = 621
31.6 b. Gay
10.6 c. Don't Know

51. Who referred you to the therapist? n = 853 /76

40.9 a. Friend
5.3 b. Physician
.7 c. Minister
22.3 d. Self
1.8 e. Family
4.5 f. Gay agency/switchboard
10.1 g. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
14.5 h. Not applicable

52. Have you seen a therapist more than at one period in your life? n = 866 /77

57.9 YES
42.1 NO

CARD 5

53. What type of therapy have you had? Check all that apply. /6-11

70.7 a. Individual
25.0 b. Couple
29.9 c. Group
6.6 d. Family
3.0 e. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
14.3 f. Not applicable

54. For what type of problems have you sought help? Check all that apply. /12-21

57.4 a. Personal problems
44.5 b. Relationship problems
31.4 c. Relationship break-up
9.6 d. Death of someone close
17.7 e. Family problems
13.0 f. Sexual problems
8.6 g. Alcohol abuse
3.5 h. Drug abuse (other than alcohol)
6.7 i. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
13.0 j. Not applicable

55. Have you ever received treatment primarily for the purpose of "curing" your homosexuality? n = 951 /22

3.9 a. Yes, but it was not my idea
3.8 b. Yes, voluntarily
92.3 c. No

56. If YES, what were the results? n = 74 /23

81.1 a. My sexual orientation remained homosexual
13.5 b. My sexual orientation changed to heterosexual temporarily
5.4 c. My sexual orientation became bi-sexual

57. Have you ever been hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital or unit? n = 967 /24

8.8 YES
91.2 NO

58. If you have used both straight and gay couseling services, which was more effective and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

59. Have you ever been in a relationship that you could define as a battering relationship? n = 984

20.3 YES 76.0 NO 3.7 DON'T KNOW /25

Were you the receiver of violence? n = 882

22.9 YES 25.9 NO 51.2 NOT APPLICABLE /26

SCWU 10/88

Were you the batterer? n = 839

7.2 YES 34.3 NO 58.5 NOT APPLICABLE /27

If this relationship is a continuing one, has the violence n = 680 /28

5.4 a. Stopped
1.6 b. Decreased
.1 c. Increased
.6 d. No change
92.2 e. Not applicable

If this relationship is over, give the number of years and months, that it lasted. mean = 4.83 /29-32

_____ YEARS _____ MONTHS

If this relationship is continuing, how many years and months has it lasted? mean = 5.353 /33-36

_____ YEARS _____ MONTHS

60. As an adult, have you ever become so angry that you have broken an object in anger? n = 984 /37

57.9 YES 42.1 NO

61. Have you ever hit another person in anger? n = 986 /38

50.6 YES 49.4 NO

62. Have you ever been on the receiving end of violence in a quarrel with your lover (female)? n = 971 /39

36.1 YES 63.9 NO

63. If there is violence in your present relationship, how do you feel about it? Please check only one. n = 833 /40

.6 a. We accept it and it's no big deal
.1 b. It's exciting
6.5 c. It's upsetting, but we are working it out
.7 d. We are breaking up soon
.6 e. We don't know what to do
91.5 f. Not applicable

64. If you have never been involved in a relationship where anger toward each other was expressed violently, do you have lesbian friends, now or in the past, that are in such a relationship? n = 858 /41

38.1 YES 61.9 NO

65. My general health status is: n = 988 /42

46.4 a. Excellent
45.3 b. Good
7.6 c. Fair
.7 d. Poor

66. In general, I believe my exercise level to be n = 989 /43

10.4 a. More than adequate
40.3 b. Adequate
49.2 c. Inadequate

n = 984
DEFINITION #67
ALOT A+B = 37.9
MOD. C = 25.0
A LITTLE D+E = 37.1

67. I exercise n = 984 /44

17.7 a. Almost every day
20.2 b. Several times a week
25.0 c. Once or twice a week
15.1 d. Once or twice a month
22.0 e. Rarely

68. During menopause, many women experience the following symptoms. Please rate the extent you were bothered by each symptom. /45-51

	n =	LOW 1.	MODERATE 2.	SEVERE 3.
a. Headaches	184	68.5	23.9	7.6
b. Hot flashes	210	51.0	31.0	18.1
c. Backache	187	50.8	35.3	13.9
d. Depression	195	41.5	47.7	10.8
e. Mood swings	189	38.6	45.0	16.4
f. Irritability	192	34.4	50.5	15.1
g. Not applicable, I am not of menopausal age				

69. Please answer the following questions in relation to your physician. If you have more than one physician, select the one you consider your family, or usual physician, and answer in relation to him/her. Check all that apply. /52-60

21.8 a. I don't have a physician at all
23.7 b. My physician is a woman
42.5 c. My physician is a man
10.3 d. My physician is gay
24.5 e. My physician knows I am gay
32.8 f. My physician does not know I am gay
6.7 g. I cannot tell my physician I am gay because I think disapproval or nonacceptance would be reflected in my care
35.8 h. I would choose a lesbian physician if I could find one
40.5 i. My gayness is not relevant to my medical care

70. Please indicate any sexual problems you have by checking all that apply. /61-69

DEFINED:
none = 51.3
low 21.3
med 12.0
high 15.5 (3+)

63 a. I'm too interested in sex too often
20.7 b. I'm not interested in sex as much as I would like to be
12.1 c. I'm interested and become aroused, but get too uptight to really enjoy having sex the way I would like to
9.6 d. I enjoy much of sexual activity, but rarely have an orgasm
4.0 e. Even when I have orgasms, I do not feel satisfied sexually
3.8 f. I arouse very easily and have orgasms very early – too early for my partner(s)
1.4 g. I have to almost force myself to have sex, as I am really turned off by sex
46.3 h. None of the above
15.2 i. Other _____
(PLEASE SPECIFY)

71. From what you have heard, was your birth: /70 71

n = 731
29.1 a. Easy
25.9 b. Difficult
45.0 c. Don't know

n = 511
4.9 a. Breach
8.6 b. Caesarian
86.5 c. Normal

72. Have you ever had a sex-change operation? n = 980 /72

.3 a. Yes, male to female
.0 b. Yes, female to male
2.0 c. No, but I am considering it
97.7 d. No, and I am not considering it

73. Have you ever had a venereal disease? Check all that apply. /73-75

2.1 a. Yes, from contact with a woman
5.9 b. Yes, from contact with a man
90.4 c. No

74. Have you ever had a serious health problem lasting some time? For each answer, please list the health problem. /76-80

9.4 a. Yes, as a child, but not now _____
4.9 b. Yes, as a child, and I still have it _____
10.6 c. Yes, as an adult, but not now _____
13.0 d. Yes, as an adult, and I still have it _____
65.9 e. No

CARD 6
/6-13

75. How are your menstrual periods? Check all that apply.

DEFINED n = 819
A = REGULAR 49.3
B = IRREGULAR 7.2
C = OK NOW 12.6
D+E = PAINFUL 30.9
OMIT F/G/H

66.0 a. Usually regular
11.4 b. Usually irregular
10.4 c. Painful as an adolescent, but okay now
19.3 d. Painful as an adolescent, and still painful
6.2 e. Okay as an adolescent, but painful now
10.7 f. I have had a hysterectomy
9.5 g. I have reached menopause
7.4 h. Other _____
(PLEASE SPECIFY)

76. If you have reached menopause, please answer the following. n=594

_____ Age menopause began /14:15

5.6 a. Menopause is over and was fairly easy for me /16
.2 b. Menopause was difficult, but I handled it without medication
1.9 c. Menopause was difficult, and I used medication for assistance
3.7 d. Menopause was not particularly difficult, but I used medication for assistance
14.0 e. I am still in menopause and have no major problems
74.7 f. Not applicable

77. If you used medication for assistance during menopause, please check all that apply. /17-20

6.3 a. Hormones
1.1 b. Nerve medicines
1.0 c. Antidepressants
2.3 d. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

THE LESBIAN EXPERIENCE

78. When you told your parents you were gay, how was the news received? Check only one. /21

DEFINED: n=957
A+B+E 37.4 ACCEPTING
C+D 13.6 NOT "
F 49.0 NOT TOLD

n=957
13.8 a. They had already guesssed it, so it wasn't much of a problem
13.3 b. They were unhappy at first, then it straightened out
11.0 c. They were unhappy at first, and are still pretty upset
2.6 d. They could not accept it and told me not to come back until I "changed"
10.3 e. They were very supportive and understanding
49.0 f. Not applicable

n=812 79. If you have not told your parents, do you think they know anyway? /22

20.6 a. Yes, one of them
15.4 b. Yes, both of them
20.7 c. No
43.3 d. Not applicable

80. Please choose one of the following which best describes your current living arrangement. /23

DEFINED:
A = ALONE = 30.4
E = ♀ LOVER = 49.7
B,C, D,F,G = OTHER = 19.9

n=984
30.4 a. Alone
10.6 b. With a friend
7.6 c. With family member(s)
.4 d. With a male lover
49.7 e. With a female lover
.6 f. With several female lovers
.7 g. With a husband

81. If you currently have a woman lover, how long have you been lovers? /24

DEFINED:
A = NONE = 28.1
B+C = .1-5 = 58.2
D+E = 5+ = 13.8

n=937
28.1 a. No lover currently
21.0 b. Under one year
37.1 c. 1 to 5 years
9.5 d. 5 to 10 years
4.3 e. Over 10 years

82. What is your orientation in relation to role playing? Check only one. /25

DEFINED:
A = NEVER = 76.0
B,C = BUTCH = 15.9
D,E = FEMME = 8.2
OMIT F/G/H

n=980
68.5 a. Never been into role playing
10.2 b. Used to role play (Butch), but not now
4.1 c. Have always been a Butch and still am
3.9 d. Used to role play (Femme), but not now
3.5 e. Have always been a Femme and still am
1.0 f. Have not been into role playing in the past, but am beginning to get interested in it now.
5.9 g. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)
3.0 h. Not applicable

83. When making love with another woman /26

n=966
11.7 a. I never, or almost never have an orgasm
63.1 b. I always or almost always have an orgasm
25.2 c. I usually have several orgasms

84. Please indicate the degree of your activity for each of the following. /27-34

	n =	NEVER 1	SELDOM 2	SOMETIMES 3	FREQUENTLY 4
a. Read gay or lesbian publications	987	3.5	14.8	37.2	44.5
b. Go to gay bars or discos	987	9.7	36.2	38.8	15.3
c. Attend gay religious services	977	67.8	18.3	7.6	6.3
d. Choose a gay restaurant for your meal out	964	15.5	32.4	39.8	12.3
e. Stay in a gay motel when you travel	951	49.8	26.0	19.7	4.5
f. Attend concerts/performance by gay entertainers	973	12.2	26.6	41.0	20.1
g. Support gay businesses	978	7.6	16.6	44.8	31.1
h. Attend gay fundraisers	984	18.9	21.5	39.5	20.0

85. Please indicate all of the types of organizations to which you belong. /35-44

31.3 a. Lesbian educational organization
36.6 b. Lesbian social organization
14.8 c. Lesbian political organization
30.1 d. Feminist organization
6.3 e. Gay or lesbian caucus within heterosexual organization
16.8 f. Cosexual gay organization – educational
11.8 g. Cosexual gay organization – political
13.0 h. Cosexual gay organization – social
26.0 i. I don't belong to any
11.1 j. Other _____ (PLEASE SPECIFY)

86. Who knows you're gay? Check all that apply. /45-52

78.5 a. My lover(s)
93.7 b. My gay friends
84.5 c. Some non-gay friends
71.9 d. Some family members
61.2 e. Some co-workers
38.1 f. Some neighbors
24.1 g. Almost everybody
.7 h. Only myself

87. Have you personally "come out" to anyone in your family? Check only one. n = 980 /53

8.3 a. Yes, only after I was accused
6.4 b. Yes, because I thought they suspected
58.6 c. Yes, I volunteered the information
26.7 d. No

88. Please rate your sexual orientation now based on your psychological reactions as well as your current activities and experiences. n = 981 /54

.2 a. Exclusively heterosexual with no lesbian orientation
.8 b. Primarily heterosexual with incidental lesbian orientation
1.3 c. Primarily heterosexual, more than incidentally lesbian orientation
2.7 d. Equally heterosexual and lesbian orientation
6.3 e. Primarily lesbian, but more than incidentally heterosexual orientation
19.3 f. Primarily lesbian, but incidentally heterosexual orientation
69.4 g. Exclusively lesbian orientation

DEFINED
A,B,C,D 5.0 (1/2 + HETERO)
E,F 25.6 (SOME ")
G 69.4 (NO ")

89. Was your first sexual experience with a woman initiated by n = 990 /55

13.9 a. Someone younger than yourself
24.6 b. Someone older than yourself
33.3 c. Someone about your age
27.7 d. Yourself
.4 e. I haven't had a sexual experience with a woman yet

DEFINED:
A,B,C = OTHER = 72.2
D = SELF = 27.8
E OMIT

SCWU 10/88

90. Please check the statement you believe to be most true for you as an individual. n=975 /56-

26.8 a. I was born gay
10.9 b. Environmental influences made me gay
24.0 c. I consciously chose to be gay
2.3 d. I'm not sure I'm gay
36.1 e. I don't know what was most influential in my being gay

91. From the following list, please indicate the type of relationship you prefer AND the type of relationship you usually have. Make only one choice in each column. /57-58

PREFER	TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	USUAL
86.8	a. Long term, close committment	65.0
2.3	b. Series of intense affairs	10.9
.9	c. Short term, close committment	16.8
.3	d. One night stands	1.9
8.3	e. An open relationship	3.4
.1	f. Marriage with a man and a relationship with a woman concurrently	.8
1.2	g. Other, please specify	1.3

n=962 n=859

92. Do you know or suspect that any of these people are gay? /59-74

.3 a. Fraternal twin
.2 b. Identical twin
11.1 c. Brother
6.0 d. Sister
5.7 e. Mother
2.3 f. Father
9.7 g. Aunt
6.7 h. Uncle
26.8 i. Cousin
1.3 j. Grandparent
16.1 k. Close family friend
8.1 l. Niece or nephew
.3 m. Foster parent
47.0 n. High school teacher
14.5 o. Grammar school teacher
40.6 p. College professor

MISC. DEFINITIONS:

EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION / AFRAID OF...

50.1	NONE	51.3
22.2	LOW=1	21.3
14.1	MED.=2	12.0
13.7	HIGH=3+	15.5

AGE n=990

>30	28.3
30-40	40.1
40-50	22.7
50-60	7.2
60+	1.7

85

TOPIC/SUMMARY INDEX

Topic Index

Topic	Response #
1. Age	1, 20
2. Anger	47, 60, 61
3. Battering	59, 61-64
4. Beliefs, Political	24, 25
5. Birth Control	23
6. Birth Trauma	71
7. Blackmail	34
8. Brought Up By . . .	19
9. Business Investments	27
10. Child Custody	41
11. Children	22, 41
12. Childhood Disruptions	20
13. Childhood Gender Style	14
14. City of Residence	18
15. Community Awareness	84, 85
16. Custody	41
17. Discrimination--Employment	33, 34
18. Discrimination--Housing	31, 32
19. Discrimination--Immig./Nat'l	40
20. Discrimination--Military	43-45
21. Discrimination--Parental	32, 39, 78, 79
22. Discrimination--School/Educ.	38
23. Discrimination--Services	35
24. Education	4, 5
25. Employment Discrimination	33, 34
26. Employment Status	6, 8
27. Ethnicity	2
28. Exercise	66, 67
29. Family Disruptions	20
30. Feminist Movement	25, 85
31. Gay Rights Movement	24, 84, 85
32. Gender ID/Role	14, 82
33. Handedness	15
34. Health Care	36, 37, 69, 76, 77
35. Health	65-68, 73-77
36. Housing Discrimination	31, 32
37. Housing	17, 31, 32
38. Immig./Nat'l Discrimination	40
39. Income Level	10
40. Income Source	9, 27
41. Indebtedness	28
42. Interests	29, 30
43. Investments	27
44. Job Satisfaction	21
45. Kinsey Scale	88
46. Label Self	0
47. Leisure Time	29, 30
48. Marital Status	13, 80
49. Member/Non-Member	0A
50. Menopause	68, 75-77
51. Menstrual Periods	75
52. Mental Health Care	46, 48-58
53. Mental Health	47, 53, 54, 77
54. Military Discrimination	43-45
55. Military Service	42-45
56. Occupational Group	7, 8
57. Orgasm	70-83
58. Parental Discrimination	32, 39, 78, 79
59. Political Activity	26
60. Political Beliefs	24, 25
61. Race	2
62. Raised By . . .	19
63. Refer to Self	0
64. Relationship Status	13, 16, 80, 81, 91
65. Relationships with Men	11, 13
66. Religion	3
67. Residence City	18
68. Residence Location	18
69. Residence Type	17
70. School/Educ. Discrimination	38
71. Services Discrimination	35
72. Sex-Change	72
73. Sexual Problems	70
74. Siblings	12, 23, 92
75. Stress	47, 54
76. Substance Abuse	47, 54
77. Travel	29
78. Venereal Disease	73

Summary Index

a. child/family bg	12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 38, 39, 90, 92
b. demographics	1-10, 17, 18, 27, 28, 29
c. discrimination	31-41, 43-45, 55, 56, 78
d. employment	6-8, 21
e. gender role	14, 82
f. l/g/f awareness	0, 0a, 25, 84, 85
g. mental health	46-64, 66-68, 70, 75, 76, 77
h. nature/nurture	22, 90, 92
i. outness	22, 31, 78, 79, 84-87
j. physical health	36, 37, 65-69, 73-77
k. politics	24-26
l. relationships	11, 13, 16, 22, 80, 81, 91
m. sexuality	70, 72, 83, 88, 89, 91
n. violence	47, 59, 60-64

SCWU 10/88